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Rightly Dividing the Word of Truth :

A CHARGE TO THE CLERGY

B. 1103
OF THE

PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH

OF THE

DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA.

BY THE

RIGHT REV. WILLIAM MEADE, D. D.

RICHMOND:

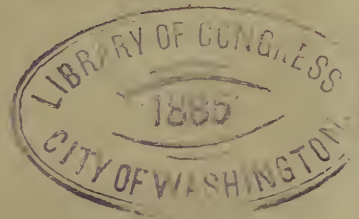
H. K. ELLYSON, PRINTER, MAIN STREET.

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"Rightly dividing the word of truth.—2. TIMOTHY II: 15.  
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MY DEAR BRETHREN:

In the twenty-seventh canon of our church, it is declared to be "proper, that every Bishop shall deliver, at least once in three years, a charge to the clergy of his diocese, unless prevented by reasonable cause." It has now been nearly five years since this duty was performed, though some other publications have meanwhile been issued, having in view, my brethren of the Clergy as well as laity, which I hope will be accepted as a reasonable cause of delay. In my last, I selected as a topic suited to the times, "the law of proportion" as exhibited by the sacred writers in their treatment of the several parts of our holy religion, giving to each their due relative importance, and not suffering any one to encroach on the rights of others, as plainly assigned them by their divine Author. Kindred to this, and yet sufficiently distinct for a separate charge, is the one now presented to your consideration; not as though you were ignorant of it, or neglected to enforce it, but because the circumstances of our times require that we should study it with peculiar care, and set it before our hearers with the greatest possible distinctness and earnestness.

The subject is plainly announced in the words of inspiration placed at the head of this charge. The right division of God's word, so that each may have his portion in due season, and the ministers of God be clear from the blood of all men, having faithfully declared the whole counsel of

God, is a most important duty, about which, we ought often to confer one with another. So should we use it, that the word in our hands may be as a hammer to break, a fire to burn, a sword to pierce; the hard hearts of the ungodly, at the same time, that we administer it as milk to the babes in Christ, and meat to the strong men, thereby doing the work of the ministry in converting sinners and perfecting saints, so that we need not be ashamed when called to give our account.

“All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work.” The commandment of God is exceeding broad, says the Psalmist; and we have need to pray that God would open the eyes of our minds that we may see the wondrous things that are therein. We should search the scriptures daily, that we may be scribes well instructed, and ready at all times, to bring forth things new and old, for the benefit of our hearers. The Bible revealed unto men, at sundry times and in divers manners, is not a large volume for naught. It is no cunningly devised fable, but a wonderful, harmonious, comprehensive system, full of beautiful and useful variety, suited to all ages, characters and circumstances of man. Though some things be weightier and more important than others, yet none must be despised or neglected, not even the least of God’s commandments, at the risk of being regarded ourselves, “as least in the kingdom of heaven.” Having proper regard to time, place and manner, all should receive due attention and be rightly applied. If God has thought fit to reveal and watch over, and hand down to us, all that is in the sacred volume, it is our duty to honor the same by reading and using it. Our Protestant forefathers, greatly excelled in the abundant use which they made of all the scriptures, by way of illustration, and argument. In this, they only followed the ex-

ample of our Lord and the apostles, in relation to the old Testament. But whether we be using and dividing the old or new Testament, one thing on our part is necessary to the right distribution and application of the same; and that is, a correct knowledge of the divisions of men, as to their state in the sight of God. We must rightly classify our hearers, before we can rightly distribute God's word among them. A mistake here must be infinitely more injurious, than the error of a physician, who not knowing the disease of his patient, gives him improper medicine or supposing him to be without disease, when dangerously ill, prescribes nothing, and so ministers either to sickness or death. Our blessed Lord is called the great Physician, and his ministers stand next in rank, and must carefully study the spiritual constitution of men, their moral diseases, the symptoms thereof, and the proper remedies.

Let us then inquire what are the great leading divisions of the human family, as they present themselves to the christian minister, for the application of God's word.

DIVISION FIRST.

In the first place, we will consider the human family as divided into those who are on either side of the age of discretion. All have been on the one side. All were once infants, though millions perished at their birth. Other millions passing on through the different stages between their birth and the age of discretion, died without reaching it. Others reach, and pass beyond, the age of discretion. As to the former, born as they are with deathless souls, destined to live forever in some other world, they must be deeply interesting objects to God and man. What portion of God's word may we divide to them, and in their behalf, to those friends on earth, who so deeply feel for them. As to infants, it is true that they cannot speak, or signify to us, what passes in their minds; and whether God's spirit is per-

forming any actual operation there; and we must acknowledge that God has not spoken in the same positive and clear manner as in regard to adults. It becomes us, therefore, to speak modestly on this subject, and beware how we frame systems on its positive assumption, as a general fact. The attempt to be wise above what is written on this subject, has led to much evil in the church of God. Spiritual operations and great moral changes, as the invariable attendants, have been confidently asserted at the moment, and by the act of baptism, which have no warrant from scripture, and are unsustained by any subsequent exhibition of character. But is there nothing in scripture on which to fasten the sweet hope, that the God of love, who declares that he does not reap where he has not sowed, will not demand impossibilities of children dying in infancy, nor condemn to everlasting torment, those for whom Christ died, but who have never, by reason of their immature minds, been able to understand the blessed truth, and thus accept or reject the offered salvation? May we not surely believe that he, who, while on earth, took little children into his arms, saying, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," will not refuse them a place in some of his many mansions above? May we not, in the very command given to the Jew, to enter his child on the eighth day, into covenant with God, and the continuation of the same privilege in infant baptism, see not only a declaration of God's gracious disposition to the children of Jewish and christian parents, but towards all children born into this world of sin, just as his loving kindness to Jews and christians, is proof, not of an exclusive love to them, but of more enlarged designs towards the human family. And should he withdraw millions of infants almost as soon as they enter life, can we suppose that it would be to torment them forever? Surely, in view of all the perfections of the Deity, as seen in his works and word, we may say, "be that far from God." What though they be born in sin, and on that

account children of wrath, are they not also objects of God's compassion, through Christ's death? Has not a full ransom been paid for them? and is not God able to prepare them for heaven, no matter how soon, how suddenly they may die? Surely we may thus speak to bereaved parents, bidding them not to sorrow as those without hope, but rather to resolve that since they cannot bring their children back to earth, they will prepare to go to them.* Of how many millions of the human race may this be said, since so large a portion die in early childhood; and what an increase may this make to the number of the redeemed. How this should serve to magnify the work of redemption, in answer to the charges of those who say that God's mercy is so small, being limited to a few? Nor is this all. What numbers there are who die at different ages, between unconscious infancy, and that fearful period spoken of in scripture—a period which of necessity must be, when our faculties and affections are so matured, that we become capable of discerning between good and evil, and must make our choice between them. There may have been a gradual development of mind—a progressive increase of knowledge—the conscience may have been in a measure, enlightened and influenced by God's word and Spirit; but still, there must be a time, before which God will not hold us so responsible, as to condemn—before which, he will have compassion on our ignorance and weakness, and can save us even as he will the dying infant. If children dying in infancy, or a year or two afterwards, may be regarded as the objects of Christ's redeeming love, all ignorant as they are of it, and if dying, be the subjects of whatever change is required for their admission into heaven, where shall we draw the line, except it be at the age of discretion. At that critical, eventful, and to us, unknown period, differing, as it needs must, in different persons, the offer of salvation is either accepted or rejected;

* See the latter part of the Appendix.

condemnation is fastened on us, or pardon granted, and then the faith and repentance required of every one as soon as capable of them, must, according to the baptismal vow, be exercised, or we are under condemnation henceforth, until we obtain them. But is there no word of God to be divided to parents, teachers, and to the children themselves, in order to their preparation for the more ready accepting of Christ with penitent and believing hearts, as soon as they are capable of a deliberate choice? May we neglect and leave them to themselves, because confident that nothing which they can do, will subject them to the sentence of exclusion from heaven, if they die before that critical period, no matter how nearly they may have reached it? Far should it be from us to encourage such neglect, for though, if one die, touching as it were, the age of discretion, it may be safe; yet if it lives, the probability of its accepting the offer of salvation when reaching the age of discretion and accountability, and even afterwards, so long as it lives, may be very much diminished by the neglect of a pious nurture. At what time, and in what way God may begin the work of religion in the soul of the young, we know not; but as there are preparatory operations in the mind of the adult convert, before the decisive step is taken, and the dividing line between life and death is passed, so it doubtless is, with the younger ones; and religious education has much to do with this. Children religiously trained, the subjects of many prayers, and living under every favorable influence, are surely more likely to choose the one thing needful, when reaching the age of discretion, than those who have been neglected and left to their own native corruptions. A moral change may have been going on, and obstacles may have been removed, and prepossessions established, and good habits formed, and the forms of religion observed, and thus, all things be more favorable for turning unto God, for embracing Christ; but still the choice must be deliberately made be-

tween life and death by the exercise of faith and penitence, or the rejection of them. Some of those on whom much religious nurture has been expended, and who at one time seemed most promising, have, to the grief of pious parents and friends, refused to make the right choice, thereby proving that we must become children of God by a positive act of faith in Jesus Christ, involving a true repentance towards God. Ministers have much to say to parents and children concerning this fearful period. Many parents' hearts have been wrung with anguish when losing their children at an age which must border on that eventful period, not knowing on which side it lay, and whether they dare hope for those who died without giving any evidence of a true conversion. God no doubt keeps us in ignorance of this precise period, for the same reason that the day of our death is concealed from us, that we may be the more careful to be ever prepared for it by an early conversion. Parents and ministers cannot be too anxious about the early religious training of the young, that their conversion may be the more easy and probable by reason of obstacles removed, and prepossessions established, and that sudden death may not overwhelm them with sorrow, or involve them in dreadful doubt.

I cannot dismiss this subject, however, without referring to a great and dangerous mistake which some make as to the signs of piety in the young, in misinterpreting some expressions of our Lord concerning children, and applying them especially to baptized children, by supposing them to recognize sanctified tempers and religious affections, whereas mere natural and instinctive ones are alluded to. In the 18th of St. Matthew and 10th of St. Mark, a comparison is instituted by our Lord between his disciples and little children, the latter being held up as examples to the former, and very properly indeed, if in the way that Christ intended. Their natural dispositions of docility, credulity, affection, heir freedom from ambition and pride and unforgiving

tempers, might well be adduced to show christians how they should exercise the sanctified affections of humility, teachableness, faith, love, &c., towards God. As little children are followers of their earthly parents, leaning on them, relying on them, loving them and trusting them in all things, so christians should be "followers of the Lord, as dear children." But it would be a great mistake to suppose that God meant to declare that the natural dispositions of little children, were the same with the gracious affections of renewed disciples, because they are compared together. Things are compared together, not because of their identity, but because of certain resemblances whereby apt illustrations may be made. Children are compared to lambs, and adults to sheep. We are all exhorted to be harmless as doves. Our Lord himself is called the Lamb and was said to be led as a lamb to the slaughter; but surely children and christians, and our Lord himself, were very different from lambs or doves in most important respects. And yet there are those who hold up baptized children as perfect models to adults, on account of their credulity, and forgiveness, and obedience to parents, and observance of the forms of religion, although there is evidently nothing more in these traits of character than has ever been observed in human nature, under every form of religion. If indeed we adopt this principle, we may deceive both adults and children as they grow up, to their eternal ruin, and will reduce christianity to mere morality and the exercise of some amiable disposition, which we have in common with some of the more inoffensive of the other animals. Our baptismal service has clearly avoided this error. It begins by asserting the deep corruption of our nature and the absolute necessity of renewal, and then recites the passage from St. Mark, and having that of St. Matthew evidently in view also, exhorts us to follow the innocency of those little children; and that, too, before they were blessed by Christ. It is evident that their free-

dom from actual transgression—their natural qualities of credulity, and docility, and contentment, and forgiveness, constituted the innocency spoken of, and that christians when changed by grace were required to be towards their fellow christians and our Lord, even as these little ones were towards one another and their parents by nature, while acting from no intelligent principle, higher than that which governed the innocent lambs to which they are also compared. It is very important to observe this distinction, in order to the right understanding of this part of our baptismal service, and of the scriptures alluded to, and to prevent most fatal mistakes in relation to the character of our children. *

In support of what has been said concerning the age of discretion and the choice then necessarily made, we may refer to the vow and promise at baptism, that faith and repentance shall be then forthcoming as soon as they are capable thereof; to the catechism which repeats the same; and to the confirmation service, when the child being come to years of discretion, is expected to come forward and take upon itself the obligation assumed in its behalf. All of these are in

* Mr. Newman in one of those sermons which have been so widely circulated through our land, asks of the Baptized, "Did not he, (Christ) in baptism cast out the evil spirit, and enter into thee himself, and dwell in thee as if thou hadst been an archangel, or one of the seraphims who worship before him continually." Vol. 2d, p. 85. And in another place, speaking of children regenerate in baptism, says, "the simplicity of a child's ways and notions, his ready belief of every thing he is told, his artless love, his frank confidence, his confession of helplessness, his ignorance, his inability to conceal his thoughts, his contentment, his prompt forgetfulness of trouble, his admiring without coveting, *and above all his reverential spirit*, looking at all things about him as wonderful, as tokens of the One invisible, are all evidence of his being lately (as it were) a visitant in a higher state of things." Vol. 1st, page 248—9. Such eulogies of the innocency and piety of baptized children, confounding grace and nature together, are but too common now amongst us. If they are received, then amiable dispositions, and mere natural religion, unsanctified morality, will soon take the place of christianity; of that christianity which consists in living faith and deep penitence, with the graces and good works growing out of them.

strict accordance with the spirit of our religion, and with the relation in which we stand to our God and Saviour. We might refer also to the opinions which prevailed among the ancient Jews as to the period of responsibility; and the method adopted to prepare the young for the early acknowledgement of the covenant, and the open profession of religion. The age of thirteen was designated as the most probable average period of responsibility, at which time a practice similar to our rite of confirmation prevailed.

DIVISION SECOND.

Having said thus much, on rightly dividing that portion of God's word which belongs to those who have not yet reached the fearful age of discretion and decision, we now proceed to inquire, what is due to those two grand divisions, which make up all the rest of mankind, from that period to their death. That there are but two, surely none can deny. There is but one heaven, with its many mansions for the blest, but one hell, with its mouth enlarged to receive all who are lost. Those who at death rise or sink to those far distant places, must needs differ widely in their characters, and be very differently regarded by God, who will assign them their abodes. Wherefore, we find all men divided into two classes, though called by different names, such as saints and sinners; enemies and friends; the children and servants of God, or of the devil; those who hate, and those who love God; those who are under condemnation, and those who are pardoned; the renewed and unrenewed. All men are thus divided in character and condition, in the fullest sense, after having reached the age of discretion. If they do not then by their own act, embrace the life that is offered them in Christ, they choose death. If they do not then turn to God, they turn from him, and follow their old and corrupt nature, and can claim nothing, hope nothing, from God's tenderness to children, and compassion to the ignorant and weak. Henceforth they must of

necessity be in one or other of two states ; on one side or the other of a dividing line, and traveling on one or other of two roads, leading to one or other of two places—heaven or hell ; for we read of no third place, of no *via media* leading thereto. But the fearful consideration is, that we are all of us liable each moment to die—in the midst of life being in death, and must die on the one or the other side of this line, and be forever on that side upon which death finds us. We may be nearer to it, or further from it ; may be by comparison with some others, almost christians, not far from the kingdom—but we must be on the one side or the other, and may lose heaven, as many other things are lost, when comparatively but little was required to gain or secure them. And yet though differing somewhat in character, we must if lost all agree so far as to be fit subjects for the same doom, meet companions in the same woe. We repeat it, that though there may be degrees of glory in heaven, and of suffering in hell, there are no other places revealed to suit any modifications of character among those who die the friends or the enemies of God. A limbus infantum, or place for unbaptized children, and a purgatory for the half converted, half justified adults have been imagined, and even boldly asserted, but God's word, large as it is, knows nothing of either, and we have nothing to divide on that subject. The dreadful fact of a great dividing line commenced on earth, and widening and deepening into an impassable gulf which no angel's wing shall pass over, is clearly revealed and should press heavily on the heart of every minister of religion, making him anxiously to inquire which of his people are on the side of perdition, and to urge them by the most affecting considerations to press forward, and escape from the region of death. *

* In the Homily on prayer, it is written, "for the scripture doth acknowledge but two places after this life ; the one proper to the elect and blessed of God ; the other to the damned souls." "Every mortal man dieth either

As the time in which we become the sons of God, and pass from death to life, is, next to that of our entering into heaven itself, the most interesting period of our lives, and the act by which it is accomplished the most important of all our acts, it is impossible that we should be otherwise than anxious when our souls are concerned for themselves, to ascertain how and when this mighty change occurs. Of course none but God can forgive sin and number us among his children. Now he tells us that he does it by his Son Jesus Christ, without the shedding of whose blood there can be no remission of sin. But does the fact of Christ's death do it of itself, without any act on the part of men? Are all who are saved, saved by that act necessarily, and does the spirit of Christ enter into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father! as a matter of course, and necessarily because of his death? The scriptures speak otherwise, urging that this blessing must be sought—sought by faith—by an act of the inward man.

We must believe that Christ hath actually died for us, and will pardon, accept and save us—that sinners as we are, God is entirely able and willing to do this—to save even to the uttermost all who come unto him through Christ. It is one of the most extraordinary acts of the human mind. It is an act that removes mountains and casts them into the sea. Lord! I believe, help my unbelief, cries the soul under the mighty effort. It is the great work of God in the soul of man; for none can call Jesus Lord, but by the Holy Ghost. Our Lord while on earth was preparing the minds of men for the exercise of this act, by the various and wonderful cures

in a state of salvation or damnation, according as the words of the evangelist John do also plainly import, saying, 'He that believeth on the Son of God hath eternal life; but he that believeth not on the Son shall never see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him,' Again, "as the scripture teacheth, let us think that the soul of man passing out of the body goeth straightway either to heaven, or else to hell, whereof the one needeth no prayer, and the other is without redemption. The only purgatory wherein we must trust to be saved, is the death and blood of Christ, which if we apprehend with a true and steadfast faith, it purgeth and cleanseth us from all our sins, even as well as if he were now hanging on the cross."

which he effected in the bodies of men. In order to these, he always required on the part of those who were healed, that they should believe that he was able to do it.

When he saw that they had faith to be healed, he put forth his divine power; the blind received sight—the lame walked—the lepers were cleansed—sins were forgiven also; at which time our Lord most emphatically ascribed his miraculous cures, not to any good thing which they did, whereby his favor was propitiated, but to their faith. “According to your faith be it unto you,” was his constant reply; and when the work was done he would add, “thy faith hath saved thee”—and sometimes, “thy sins are forgiven—go in peace.” His disciples also continued after his death to do likewise in his name and by his power in behalf of those who believed that Christ was able to do it. All that these poor sufferers brought was their wretchedness and their faith.* By so many compassionate miracles in behalf of the sick, and by even raising the dead in answer to the prayer of faith by the distressed relatives, our Lord’s great object seemed to be to prove that the Son of Man had power on earth to forgive sin. He bid his apostles go forth, declaring that all the ends of the earth must look to him and be saved, as the Israelites were healed by looking on the brazen serpent.

To the question, what must I do to be saved, the simple answer was—“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou

* What an affecting illustration of the helpless condition of fallen sinners, all over wounds and bruises, their whole heart sick and their head faint, without strength, no health in them, is furnished in the cases which were brought to our Lord while on earth for the exercise of his healing power. They were the blind, deaf, dumb, palsied, leprous, even the dead; all of whom were beyond the power and skill of man, incurable by human art. One even less affected than some of these, had spent during eighteen years of suffering all that she had on physicians, and was nothing better, but rather worse. Another lay at the pool of Bethesda waiting for the moving of the waters, but when they were moved, he could not even raise himself to bathe therein. But Christ, by a word accompanying the exercise of his divine power, caused them to arise and walk forth, healthful and rejoicing. Such examples should be set before wretched sinners to encourage them to go to Christ with broken hearts, and plead the promise that he would save to the uttermost.

shalt be saved." The apostle Paul knowing well how the proud heart of man would disdain such a simple method of achieving so great a work, anticipates the objection—say not in thine heart who hath ascended into heaven, or who hath gone down into the deep, but the word is nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thine heart. Nothing but a hearty faith and open confession of Christ was needful. The same apostle goes back a great way to the father of the faithful for an illustration and example of saving faith—of a personal appropriating faith. Abraham not only had that general faith by which he that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of all those who diligently seek him—that faith which nothing wavers as it hopes to receive any thing of the Lord, but also a special and precious faith which had salvation through Christ as its great object. Strange and almost impossible under the circumstances of the case as it seems to be, he believed that in his old age, and in the old age of Sarah his wife, a child should be born to them, in whose line Christ should be born. "Against hope he believed in hope." "Being fully persuaded that what God had promised, he was able to perform; he staggered not through unbelief, but was strong in faith giving glory to God," and this faith, says the apostle, was imputed to him for righteousness.* Nor says the apostle, was it written for his sake alone, that it was imputed, but for us also, to whom it shall

* Whosoever would see the character and office of faith fully set forth, should read what St. Paul says of it in the 11th chapter of his epistle to the Hebrews. There he will see that as in Abraham, and in those who came to our Lord to be healed, it is a strong confidence in God's power and faithfulness, to do the most unmerited and wonderful things for us miserable sinners, as well as things already done by him. It is to us the evidence of things not seen, by which we believe in them as though we had seen them, and thus it becomes the substance of things hoped for, putting us in possession of them, or their foretastes. Happy are they who having not seen, do yet believe. Their hearts are purified by this hope. By such faith, says the apostle, "the elders obtained a good report;" by it "Abel offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain." By this the holy men of old, "wrought righteousness," "obtained promises," etc. The whole chapter most fully sustains the view of faith, as set forth in our articles and Homilies, showing

be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus from the dead, who was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification. The apostle clearly shows, in his epistle to the Romans, what he means by this doctrine of imputed righteousness, and the use of faith on our part to receive its benefits. He shows us that the righteousness by which we are saved is the perfect righteousness of Christ, who took our place and makes over to us all the benefits of his obedience and death. Instead of going about to establish some righteousness of our own, we must thankfully, as poor penitent sinners, go with faith to Christ and accept his righteousness as our justification with God. He declares that in consequence of this righteousness, embraced by faith, God can be just and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus. God adopts this method, that every mouth may be stopped and the whole world be guilty before him. He declares that by the deeds of the law no flesh shall be justified—that we must be justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. It is of faith, he says, that it may be of grace. Had it been through the instrumentality of some other grace than that of the faith of a poor broken hearted sinner, as of love for instance, or of some outward works, then there might have been room for boasting; but God intended to exclude all boasting by the law of faith. We must come as the poor diseased ones, with nothing but our faith and misery, saying, Lord save us or we perish; if thou wilt, thou canst make us clean. David describeth this blessedness, saying, “Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven—whose sins are covered—blessed is the man unto whom the Lord will not impute sin.” St. Paul says in behalf of all true Christians—“being justified by faith we have peace with God through

it to be an act of the penitent believer's soul, by which, as an hand, it lays hold of the promises of God in Christ, and proves to itself and others that it has obtained the blessing by its subsequent acts, thereby also strengthening itself to hold fast the blessing.

our Lord Jesus Christ"—"believing in Christ we rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory." As to others not thus believing, it must be declared, "if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins"—"he that believeth not shall be damned." This, then, is a portion of God's word which we must most faithfully deliver to all men, as setting forth the indispensable condition of salvation, for there is no other name given under heaven whereby we can be saved. We ought to remember, however, that although this faith is the instrument, and the only one by which we take hold of, and apply to ourselves the merits of Christ, as the only ground of our justification; yet God has appointed means for the obtaining this mighty instrument of faith, and that it is a most important part of a minister's duty to point out and enforce those means. Faith, though the gift of God, for no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost, cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. By the foolishness of preaching, God is pleased to give us faith, and thus save us. The scriptures then must be read and heard with prayer, that so faith may enter the heart, conducted by the Holy Ghost. But as we have said, there must be repentance also, for it must be the faith of a penitent sinner, who renounces his righteousness and gladly seizes upon the merits of Christ. Now repentance, though also the gift of God, is his gift through the law by the agency of the Spirit. The Spirit was sent to convince the world of sin, which it does by applying the perfect law of God to the conscience; and thus comes the knowledge of sin. By it, as by a sword, the Spirit slays us and makes us to cry out, wretched men that we are. The ministers of God have much to do in thus making the law minister to the right understanding of the gospel. If they fail rightly to divide the law, whereby comes the knowledge of sin to the soul, and the gospel, whereby the penitent sinner is taught to seek forgiveness only by the faith of Christ, they will virtually abolish the law and preach another gospel.

That we are correct in the foregoing view of a sinner's justification before God by faith only—that is, the living, appropriating faith of a penitent sinner—appears not only clear from scripture, but most reasonable in consideration of man's condition upon earth. If faith in Christ as a Saviour, if throwing ourselves with penitent hearts on God's mercy in Christ, as a substitute for our own imperfect works, be not sufficient for salvation; if any observances and works beside be absolutely necessary to our passing from death to life; if we can not receive pardon until a certain advancement in holiness beyond this is made, and the doing of certain things of an outward character; then will the condition of many persons who have a true faith and penitence, be hopeless, and it will be impossible to know how to understand those positive absolute promises of pardon and salvation to all penitent believers so soon as they become such. In the midst of life we are in death—what is our life but a vapor? Where is to-morrow to thousands now in highest health? How many have there been, who after coming to the most heartfelt faith in Christ, and the deepest penitence, have been most suddenly cut off without any opportunity of making a public profession of religion by baptism and other ordinances, or giving proof of their faith by a course of good living? In their case, it is indeed most comforting to refer to examples in scripture, wherein nothing but humble faith is mentioned, as for instance, that of the publican whose only prayer was; "God be merciful to me a sinner." In that prayer, there was naught but faith and penitence. He believed in God as bestowing pardon, and he prayed that he would pardon him, a sinner, and he went away justified. It is thus, that God usually proves and illustrates his doctrines and promises, so that we may make no mistake about them. But it would seem that the most remarkable confirmation and illustration of this great doctrine of justification by faith, was reserved for the last moment of our Lord's ministry on earth

The last act of his life was an act of sovereign mercy, the last words which he spoke, were to a penitent believer—were uttered on the cross. It was doubtless ordered of Heaven, that our Lord should be executed between two notorious sinners, who died in such different states of mind, that at one and the same time, the desperate wickedness of man, and the greatness of the divine mercy to the penitent, might be made manifest. The one died blaspheming and went to his own place, the other penitent and believing, and went immediately to paradise, without having any opportunity of a public union with the church by any ordinance, or the performance of any of those good works, which God has prepared for the faithful to walk in, and by which they might prove the sincerity of their faith to themselves and others. But he was a true penitent and believer. He showed his penitence by rebuking the blaspheming wretch who was on the other side, exhorting him to fear God, and acknowledging that they both died justly, instead of complaining that his punishment was too great. He showed his faith when he said to the crucified Saviour, Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Must it not have been a strong, saving, appropriating faith which could enable him to see in the crucified Jesus, now taunted as being unable to come down from the cross and save himself, none other than the Lord of glory who was able to save from hell such a wretch as he was, in the very jaws of death.

And it was simply by the instrumentality of this humble faith that he was saved, and that Christ said "this day shall thou be with me in paradise." No human being ever left this world with such a positive assurance from the lips of God himself, that heaven should be his home. What a striking illustration of God's ability to save to the uttermost, all who come to him through Christ. It has been said that this is the only case on the scriptural record, where one repenting and believing in his last moments was certainly

pardoned, and that it was under such circumstances as never had before occurred, and could not occur again, and that perhaps this may prove to be the only case of real death bed penitence. Might we not in like manner say that the case of the one who died blaspheming, is the only one on scriptural record who died blaspheming under such circumstances, and therefore this may prove to be the only case of one dying with blasphemy in his heart. Ought we not rather to consider them as each representing a class; the one designed to encourage the vilest sinners to seek mercy from Christ though in their last moments, and the other to warn against the delay of conversion, lest they should be hardened and die in their sins, even though surrounded with all the religious advantages which could be furnished. We are well persuaded that instead of this being the only instance of a genuine conversion at the last, when no opportunity for public ordinances and good works and the cultivation of the many graces of religion is afforded, that there are thousands, and hundreds of thousands now in paradise with the dying thief, who have either truly embraced Christ, and soon after been unexpectedly called away, or else have been cast on the bed of death, where they were able to do little else than to cry with the publican, "God be merciful to me a sinner," or with the dying thief, "Lord remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." If such be not the case, what then shall the minister of the gospel say of those many instances, which are continually occurring, of great changes unexpectedly appearing in the views and disposition of certain persons who have scarcely exhibited the same, when death snatches them away, before they have been able to do those good works, or observe those religious ordinances, by which we are justified in the sight of men. But they were justified before God, and accepted through Christ, and therefore saved. If such instances do not occur and may not be, what then shall a minister say to the sick, who must ere long

die, and who ask, What shall we do to be saved? Shall he tell them their case is hopeless; that sufficient time for doing the necessary good works and observing all the ordinances of religion, is not allowed them, and that it is needless to cry for mercy? How indeed must a minister feel, and how can he in sincerity offer salvation on any occasion to all his hearers, though seemingly in the midst of life, knowing as he does that some of them may die ere a few days or weeks have passed away? How can he say to them, now is the accepted time; to-day if ye will hear, harden not your hearts; if they cannot cry for mercy, and throw themselves into the arms of Christ, until after a series of outward works, for which time may not be allowed. It is thus that we feel constrained to view this subject by the light of God's word. God having determined to call very many suddenly out of this life, has not required as indispensably necessary to salvation, things which demand more time and opportunity for their performance, than will fall to their lot, but has made that only absolutely necessary which their hearts may perform, even the faith of a penitent sinner. Nor indeed is anything else demanded in order to the first and full acceptance and justification of those who live to perform other duties, (although as we shall show they have much to do in order to retain the blessing), unless indeed, we should suppose that the faith and penitence which justifieth those who die soon after, is a different thing from that which justifies such as live many years. But for this, there is no warrant in scripture—scripture knowing of only one faith that saves—that of a repenting sinner.

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH ON THE SUBJECT.

Not more certain are we that what we have said is according to scripture, than that it is according to the articles, offices, and homilies of the church and the most approved writers thereof. As to the office of faith in our justification, our article declares that "we are accounted righteous

before God only for the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, *by faith*, and not for our own works, or deservings." Observe how it says *by faith*, not *for our faith*, but *by it*, that is, by its exercise, and for the merits of our Lord Jesus Christ agreeably to what St. Paul says of the righteousness of Christ being the righteousness accepted of God and embraced by faith in us. The article adds "wherefore, that we are justified by faith only—(that is by its instrumentality—not by its merit), is a most wholesome doctrine, and very full of comfort, as more largely is expressed in the homily of justification." On turning to the homily alluded to, we find it thus written: "Because all men be sinners and offenders against God and breakers of his law and commandments, therefore can no man by his own acts, works and deeds, (seem they never so good), be justified and made righteous before God; but every man of necessity is constrained to seek for another righteousness or justification, to be received at God's own hands; that is to say, the forgiveness of his sins and trespasses in such things as he hath offended. And this justification or righteousness which we so receive of God's mercy, and Christ's merits, embraced by faith, is taken, accepted and allowed of God, for our perfect and full justification."

Again, after adducing some passages from St. Paul, it says: "In these foresaid places the apostle toucheth specially three things, which must go together in our justification. Upon God's part, his great mercy and grace; upon Christ's part, justice, that is, the satisfaction of God's justice, or the price of our redemption by the offering of his body and shedding of his blood, with fulfilling of the law perfectly and thoroughly; and upon our part, true and living faith in the merits of Jesus Christ, which yet is not ours, but by God working in us; so that in our justification is not only God's mercy and grace, but also his justice, (that is righteousness), which the apostle calls the justice of God; and it

consisteth in paying our ransom and fulfilling of the law : and so the grace of God doth not shut out the justice of God in our justification, but only the justice of man ; that is to say, the justice of our works, as to be the merits for deserving our justification. And, therefore, St. Paul declareth here nothing upon the behalf of man concerning his justification, but only a true and living faith, which, nevertheless, is the gift of God, and not man's only work without God. And yet that faith doth not shut out repentance, hope, love, dread and the fear of God, to be joined with faith in every man who is justified ; but it shutteth them out from the office of justifying. So that although they be all present together in him that is justified, yet they justify not all together. * Nor the faith also doth not shut out the justice of

* It will be interesting to my brethren to see the above view of the office of faith and the relative position of other graces substantiated by those who were contemporaries of those who drew up the Homilies or lived soon after. The following quotations are either from the Parker Library or a valuable work recently published, entitled "The Voice of the English Reformation."

THE SENTIMENTS OF HOOKER.

It is a childish cavil wherewith, in the matter of justification, our adversaries do so greatly please themselves, exclaiming, that we tread all christian virtues under our feet, and require nothing in christians but faith, because we teach that faith alone justifieth ; whereas, by this speech we never meant to exclude either hope or charity from being always joined as inseparable mates with faith in the man that is justified ; or works from being added as necessary duties, required at the hands of every justified man ; but to shew that faith is the only hand that putteth on Christ unto justification ; and Christ, the only garment, which being so put on, covereth the shame of our defiled nature, hideth the imperfection of our works, preserveth us blameless in the sight of God, before whom otherwise the weakness of our faith were cause sufficient to make us culpable, yea, to shut us from the kingdom of heaven, where nothing that is not absolute can enter. That our dealing with them be not as childish as theirs with us, when we hear of salvation by Christ alone, considering that *alone* as an exclusive particle, we are to note what it doth exclude, and where.

BISHOP HOOPE'S VIEWS.

"Although it be requisite and necessary that in the justification of a sinner contrition be present, and that necessarily charity and a virtuous life must follow ; yet doth the scripture attribute, the only remission of sin unto the mercy of God, which is given only for the mercy of Christ, and received solely by faith." "Paul doth not exclude those virtues to be present, but he excludeth the merits of those virtues, and deriveth the cause of our

our good works necessarily to be done afterwards of duty to God, but it excludeth them, so that we may not do them to this intent, to be made good of doing them."

Again, in the homily on our Lord's passion, after speaking of Christ's death for us, it says: "Now it remaineth that I show unto you how to apply Christ's death and passion to our comfort, as a medicine to our wounds, so that it may work the same effect in us wherewith it was given, namely,

acceptation into the grace of God, only for Christ." "Let the man burst his heart with contrition, believe that God is good a thousand times, burn in charity; yet shall not all these satisfy the law, nor deliver man from the ire of God, until such time as faith letteth fall all hope and confidence in the merits of such virtues as be in man, and say 'Lord behold thy unfruitful servant; only for the merits of Christ's blood give me remission of sins.'" Early writings of Bishop Hooper, p. 50, 51, Parker Library.

BISHOP COVERDALE'S VIEWS.

"Because none other virtue can so apprehend the mercy of God, nor certify us so effectually of our salvation, as this living faith doth; therefore, hath the scripture imputed our justification before God only unto faith among all other virtues; not without other virtues following, but without any other work or deed justifying." Works of Coverdale, p. 526, Parker Library.

OF PERKINS.

Thirdly. Hence we learn, that a sinner is justified by mere faith; that is, that nothing within us concurs as a cause of our justification, but faith; and that nothing apprehends Christ's obedience for our justification, but faith. This will more easily appear, if we compare faith, hope and love. Faith is like a hand, that opens to receive a gift, and so is neither love nor hope. Love is also a hand, but yet a hand that gives out, communicates and distributes. For as faith receives Christ into our hearts; so love opens the heart, and pours out praise and thanks to God, and all manner of goodness to men. Hope is no hand, but an eye that wishly looketh and waiteth for the good things which faith believeth. Therefore, it is the only property of faith to clasp and lay hold of Christ and his benefits.

OF PERKINS.

1st Reason. The faith whereby we live, is that faith whereby we are justified; but the faith whereby we live spiritually, is a particular faith, whereby we apply Christ unto ourselves, as Paul saith, (Gal. ii: 20,) "I live," that is, spiritually, "by the faith of the Son of God;" which faith he sheweth to be a particular faith in Christ, in the very words following: "who hath loved me, and given himself for me particularly;" and in this manner of believing Paul was, and is, an example to all that are to be saved. (1 Tim. i: 16, and Phil. iii: 15, 17.)

2d Reason. That which we are to ask of God in prayer, we must believe it shall be given to us, as we ask it; but in prayer we are to ask the pardon of our own sins, and the merit of Christ's righteousness for ourselves; therefore, we must believe the same particularly. The proposition is a rule

the health and salvation of our souls. For as it profiteth a man nothing to have salve unless it be well applied to the part infected; so the death of Christ shall stand us in no force, unless we apply it to ourselves in such sort as God hath appointed. Almighty God commonly worketh by means, and in this thing he hath also ordained a certain means, whereby we may take fruit and profit to our soul's health. What mean is this? Forsooth it is faith. Not an inconstant or wavering faith, but a sure, steadfast, grounded and unfeigned faith. God sent his Son into the world, saith St. John. To what end? That whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life. Mark these words, that "whosoever believeth in him." Here is *the mean* whereby we must obtain eternal life, namely "faith." After quoting various passages from scripture to the same end, it adds, "by this you may well perceive that the only mean and instrument of salvation required on our parts, is faith

of God's word, requiring that in every petition we bring a particular faith, whereby we believe, that the thing lawfully asked, shall be given accordingly. (Mark xi. 24.) The minor is also evident, neither can it be denied: for we are taught by Christ himself, to pray on this manner: "Forgive us our debts: " and to it we say *amen*; that is, that our petitions shall, without doubt, be granted unto us. (Aug. Serm. de Temp. 182.) And here note, that the church of Rome, in the doctrine of justification by faith, cuts off the principal part and property thereof. For in justifying faith, two things are required; first, knowledge revealed in the word touching the means of salvation; secondly, an applying of things known unto ourselves, which some call *affiance*. Now the first they acknowledge: but the second, which is the very substance and part thereof, they deny.

3d Reason. The judgment of the ancient church. Augustine: "I demand now, dost thou believe in Christ, O sinner? Thou sayest, I believe. What believest thou? that all thy sins may be freely pardoned in him. *Thou hast that which thou believest.*"

Bernard: "The apostle thinketh that a man is justified freely by faith. If thou believest that thy sins cannot be remitted, but by him alone against whom they were committed: but go further, and believe this too, that by him *thy sins are forgiven thee*; this is the testimony which the Holy Ghost giveth in the heart, saying, Thy sins are forgiven thee."

Cyprian: "God promiseth thee immortality when thou goest out of this world, and dost *thou doubt*? This is indeed not to know God, and this is for a member of the church in the house of faith, not to have faith. If we believe in Christ, let us believe his words and promises, and we shall never die, and shall come to Christ with *joyful security*, with him to reign forever."

—that is, a sure trust, and confidence in the mercies of God, whereby we persuade ourselves that God both hath and will forgive our sins, that he hath accepted us again into his favor,* that he hath released us from the bonds of damnation.” The same is repeated again and again in this and other homilies. In the homily on repentance, we have also confirma-

* The expression of the homily, “both hath and will forgive us our sins,” deserves a few words of explanation. According to the scriptures and our standards, saving faith consists in two things; 1st—a belief in something already existing, and positively, actually done by God in our behalf, whether we believe it and regard it or not; 2d—something yet to be done, but not without our consent and coöperation. He that cometh unto God must first believe that he is, and then, that he is the rewarder of those who diligently seek him. So as to our redemption we must believe—1st. That Christ actually died for us, redeemed us, made atonement to God, satisfied divine justice, removed the great obstacle between us and God, made salvation possible, which was, otherwise, impossible to us, gave us power to become the sons of God, opened the doors of heaven, overcame our great enemy. 2d. We must believe that he who gave his Son thus to die for us, will, with him, give us all other things needful for our eternal salvation; must believe that Christ will forgive us our sins in particular, and renew our natures and fit us for heaven, if we come to him as penitent sinners, believing that he is able to do it and will do it, just as the sick and diseased believed not only that Christ was God and able to heal them, but that he would do it, if they came to him entreating that blessing. It is in this view of the subject that the homily says, that God both hath and will forgive our sins. The words forgive, cleanse, purify and others of the kind, are used in the homilies and other writings of the reformers, in reference to the death of Christ and its virtue, even before the exercise of faith on our part, and then also as to the effects of it upon us when in faith we go to Christ. God is represented as reconciled to us by Christ’s death; but we are not reconciled to him until we go in faith and penitence and ask his forgiveness. The distinction set forth above may be seen in the following quotations from two of the homilies:—

In the homily on prayer it is written: “As the blood of Christ did redeem us on the cross, and cleanse us from our sins; even so it is now able to save all them that come unto God by it. For Christ sitting in heaven, hath an everlasting priesthood, and always prayeth to his Father for them that be penitent, obtaining by virtue of his wounds, which are evermore in the sight of God, not only perfect remission of our sins, but also all other necessities that we lack in this world.”

Again, in the homily on the passion: “We must apprehend the merits of Christ’s death and passion by faith, and that with a strong and steadfast faith, nothing doubting but that Christ by his own oblation and once offering of himself upon the cross, hath taken away our sins, and hath restored us again unto God’s favor, so fully and perfectly, that no other sacrifice for sin shall hereafter be requisite or needful in all the world.” But then beside this belief in what Christ has done in satisfying his Father, we must apply it to ourselves. “Let us steadfastly behold Christ crucified with the eyes of our heart. Let us only trust to be saved by his death and passion, and to have our sins clean washed away through his most precious blood.”

tion of what has been said as to its being the faith of a penitent sinner. This faith indeed is essential to true repentance. "The third part of repentance," it says, "is faith, whereby we do apprehend and take hold upon the promises of God, touching the free pardon and forgiveness of our sins, which promises are sealed up unto us, with the death and blood-shedding of his Son Jesus Christ. For what should avail and profit us to be sorry for our sins, to lament and bewail that we have offended our most bounteous and merciful Father, or to acknowledge and confess our offences and trespasses, though it be done never so earnestly, unless we do steadfastly believe, and be fully persuaded that God for his Son Jesus Christ's sake, will forgive us all our sins and put them out of remembrance and from his sight." Any repentance without this faith, it calls the repentance of Judas. What has been said of the sufficiency of faith in Christ, rising from the heart of a penitent sinner and laying hold on the promised salvation, is in accordance with what our Church says in her special offices. What does she require of the adult who comes to baptism, but to come truly repenting and being made the child of God by faith in Christ Jesus? What does she require of the infant in whose behalf the same promises were made, but that at the age of discretion it should come to confirmation, renewing the vow and promise thus made. What does she require of the candidate for the Lord's supper, but that he should come repenting him truly of his former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life—having a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, and being in charity with all men. There is no series of good works, no certain degree of sanctification required, but only true repentance and a faith showing itself by love—having these, they are admitted and considered as meet for heaven at that moment.* These offices would justify

* Bishop Beveridge on the article of justification, quotes Origen as sustaining the doctrine of justification by faith only, in the following words:

what has been said of the case of the dying thief and of those, no matter how soon they may die after it, who have attained to a lively faith in Christ; but the offices for the sick, the dying, and for prisoners, are so express and emphatic, that we must direct your attention to some passages therein. In the office for the visitation of the sick, we have this prayer to be said "in case of sudden surprise and immediate danger." "Oh most gracious Father, we fly unto thee for mercy in behalf of this thy servant, here lying under the sudden visitation of thine hand. If it be thy will, preserve his life, that there may be place for repentance: But, if thou hast otherwise appointed, let thy mercy supply to him the want of the usual opportunity for the trimming of his lamp. Stir up in him such sorrow for sin and such fervent love to thee, as may in a short time do the work of many days. That among the praises which thy saints and holy angels shall sing to the honor of thy mercy through eternal ages, it may be to thy unspeakable glory, that thou hast redeemed the soul of this thy servant from eternal death, and made him partaker of the everlasting life, which is through Jesus Christ our Lord." This is further shown in the visitation of prisoners about to be executed for some great crime. The minister is required to exhort him to repentance, and to say, "to this repentance and change of mind you must add a lively and steadfast faith, and dependence upon the merits of the death of Christ, with an entire resignation to the will of God. Except ye repent and believe, we can give you no hope of salvation. But if you do sincerely repent and believe, God hath declared though your sins be

"And he saith that the justification of faith only is sufficient; so that if any one do only believe, he may be justified, though no good work hath been fulfilled by him;" and then he goes on to prove it by the example of the thief upon the cross, concluding, "for this thief was justified by faith, without the works of the law; because about this the Lord did not inquire what he had before done, neither did he stay to see what work he would perform after he had believed; but being justified by his confession only, he going into paradise, carried him as a companion along with him."

red as scarlet, they shall be made white as snow; though your wickednesses have gone over your head, yet shall they not be to your destruction." After exhorting still further, he must say to the condemned prisoner,—“Now you are the object of God’s mercy, if by repentance and true faith you turn unto him; but if you neglect these things, you will be the object of his justice and vengeance. Now you may claim the merits of Christ, but if you die in your sins, his sufferings will tend to your greater condemnation.” The following prayer is yet more to the point:—“O holy Jesus, who of thine infinite goodness, didst accept the conversion of a sinner on the cross, open thine eye of mercy upon this thy servant, who desireth pardon and forgiveness, though in his latest hour he turneth unto thee. Renew in him whatsoever hath been decayed by the fraud and malice of the devil, or by his own carnal will and frailness. Consider his contrition; accept his repentance; and forasmuch as he putteth his full trust only in thy mercy, impute not unto him his former sins, but strengthen him with thy blessed Spirit; and when thou art pleased to take him hence, take him unto thy favor. This we beg through thy merits, O Lord our Saviour and our Redeemer.” To this it may be added, that the only words which are read, as the gospel in the communion service for the occasion, (for the communion is to be administered if he profess faith and penitence), are the following from St. John’s gospel:—“Verily, verily I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life.” I will only add that the same use is made of the case of the dying thief more than once in our homilies—viz: to show that faith alone—the faith of a penitent sinner—is the instrument of our justification. Thus in the homily on good works:—“The thief that was hanged when Christ suffered, did believe only, and the most merciful God justified him. And

because no man shall say again, that he lacked time to do good works, for else he would have done them; truth it is, and I will not contend therein; but this I will surely affirm, that faith only saved him. * If he had lived and not regarded faith and the works thereof, he should have lost his salvation again." Now either the faith of the dying thief and of all who die soon after their conversion, is a different thing from the faith of those who continue in this life for a sufficient time, to secure their salvation by some other method, or else all must be justified in the same way; that is, by faith in Christ, as the hand which layeth hold on the purchased salvation. But neither the scriptures, nor the standards of our Church, know of any other than a dead faith, which is perfectly useless, and a living faith, which is the same in all true christians, and is the great and only means of justification in the sight of God; † the only thing

* WESLEY'S OPINION.

It is pleasing to see how pious and able divines, though widely differing on other points, such for instance as are involved in the Calvinistic and Arminian controversy, yet agree in this great doctrine of justification by faith only. The following is the language of Mr. Wesley, in his sermon on justification:—"Surely the difficulty of assenting to the proposition that faith is the only condition, (only necessary condition he had said just before) must arise from not understanding it. We mean thereby, thus much, that it is the only thing without which none is justified; the only thing that is immediately, indispensably, absolutely requisite in order to pardon. As on the one hand, though a man should have every thing else, without faith he cannot be justified; so, on the other, though he be supposed to want every thing else, yet if he hath faith, he cannot but be justified. For suppose a sinner of any kind or degree, in a full sense of his total ungodliness, of his utter inability to think, speak or do good, and his absolute meetness for hell fire; suppose, I say, this sinner helpless and hopeless, casts himself wholly on the mercy of God in Christ, (which indeed he cannot do but by the grace of God), who can doubt but that he is forgiven in that moment? Who will affirm that any more is indispensably required, before that sinner can be justified? Now if there ever was one such instance from the beginning of the world, (and have there not been and are there not ten thousand times ten thousand), it plainly follows, that faith is, in the above sense, the sole condition of justification."

† A favorite tenet of the Romish church, adopted by some others of late, is that faith before baptism is quite a different thing from faith after baptism, when it has received not only its increase, but its virtue and quickening power from baptism. Our article says that in baptism, "faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God"—it does not inti-

which can bring peace to the troubled soul. And this remark will lead us to the third division of our fellow beings, to whom we must give their due portion of the word of God.*

mate that the character of faith is changed, or that it had not virtue before, but only that it is confirmed if faithful prayer is offered up by the soul of the baptized, just as faith is confirmed and grace increased by the humble, prayerful study and hearing of God's word, and by the Lord's supper, and confirmation, and all true prayer. That true faith, the gift of God, which was sufficient for salvation as soon as it entered the soul, must be retained, exercised and strengthened, if we continue in this world, for the various purposes for which it was designed.

* Lest for a moment it should be thought that the Author of this charge, or the teaching of the Church favors false and dangerous hopes, too often entertained of death bed conversions, this note is added. As to the teaching of the Church in those homilies, where she so strongly sets forth the all sufficiency of the true faith of a penitent sinner for salvation, though he be able to do little else than cry for mercy through Christ, there are also solemn warnings against delaying the work of salvation to the last moment of life, from the consideration that it may then have become morally impossible for some to repent and believe unto salvation—their day of grace having passed by and they become apostates and beyond the reach of such mercy as God is pleased to exercise. As to those who presumptuously put off their conversion to a dying hour, the homily on falling from God says:—"Let us, therefore, beware of such naughty boldness to sin. For God, which hath promised his mercy to them that be truly repentant, (although it be at the latter end), hath not promised to the presumptuous sinner, either that he shall have long life, or that he shall have true repentance at the last end. But for that purpose he hath made every man's death uncertain, that he should not put his hope in the end, and in the mean season (to God's high displeasure), live ungodly." In the homily on repentance, we are exhorted to make use of favorable occasions, "lest when thou wouldst repent thou hast not the grace to do it. For to repent is the good gift of God, which he will never grant unto them, who make a mock of his threatening, or seek to rule his Spirit as they list, as though his workings and Spirit were tied unto their will." In the homily on "information of certain places of scriptures," those who have gone through the various grades of sin until they have reached the seat of the scornful, are considered as beyond hope. The opinions of the Author of this charge upon this subject, are so well known to his brethren, that he need scarcely mention them, and he does it chiefly in the hope that it may have some influence on their people in abolishing or greatly diminishing a practice which he has ever regarded as injurious to the cause of religion—I mean the regular custom of funeral sermons, which is eminently calculated to tempt ministers to encourage hope concerning the dead, which have a most insufficient foundation. To believe in the possibility of a genuine death bed repentance and in the fact that many such have occurred, is quite a different thing from pronouncing favorably as to the state of the departed, from such slight signs as are too often adduced in funeral sermons, by the ministers of religion, in obituary notices by them and others. As commanded by the Church, by religion and humanity, ministers should fly to the beds of

DIVISION THIRD.

The third great division is that of believers—those who are justified by faith—are in a state of salvation—are ready for death and glory—can claim the promises, “He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live, and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die.” These we suppose to be, not about to depart at once, but to live for a longer or shorter period on earth in a state of probation. And we cannot but think that a failure to consider the difference between persons about to die, desiring to know what they must do to be saved, or dying soon after they have come to the knowledge and faith of Christ, and those believers who are appointed to live for a longer time upon earth, is with some minds a cause of no little doubt and confusion in regard to the doctrine under consideration. They do not rightly consider that what is necessary and all-sufficient to introduce us into a state of salvation and make us meet for heaven, if we thus die, is not all that is required to continue and preserve us in that state, if our lives are prolonged. Those whom God chooses to take to himself at

the sick and the dying, and beseech them to throw their souls into the arms of Christ for salvation, and adduce the most encouraging of God’s words for the purpose; but then they should beware how they too confidently speak of the result of this in consequence of any words uttered, or symptoms exhibited by the dying. Christ who saw the heart of the dying thief, might speak certainly. Not so his ministers, who by yielding to the temptation of comforting and gratifying surviving friends, may minister to the presumption of many a careless sinner, who says: “I shall have peace at last.” Funeral sermons are of pagan origin, and were copied by the early christians, who made a sad use of them. Among the heathen, the elevation of eulogized heroes to the rank of gods, and among christians, the canonizing of saints, and the supposed intercession of the same, for us, were the consequences of the unhappy practice. It were much to be desired, that instead of funeral sermons on all occasions when a large congregation has been summoned, and the ministers are so tempted to speak too favorably, it were left to them, at their discretion, to make in a few touching remarks in the house of the dead, some improvement of the event, and only on some remarkable occasions, of which themselves should be judges, depart from the general rule, and present the character of some confessedly pious person, as an example to others. I am sure it is unnecessary to add one word of caution to a single individual among my brethren as to the abuse of this doctrine of salvation by faith, and its perversion to antinomianism.

once, will be employed in such things, and be made to glorify him in such a way, as he may think proper to appoint in heaven, while those who shall be left in a state of exposure have much to do, in order to make their calling and election sure, and to fulfil God's design in continuing them in this world of sin and temptation. There is a very large division of God's word to be meted out to his saints upon earth; more especially of the New Testament, and above all, of the apostolic epistles, for they were addressed chiefly to adults, who being converted to Christ under peculiar circumstances, and professing his faith at great peril, might well be supposed sincere and true hearted, although it is evident some of these were enemies of the cross of Christ—mere pretenders to godliness. And what do the scriptures say to those who called themselves by the name of Christ—into whose hearts the spirit of Christ was sent crying Abba, Father—who were privileged to rejoice that their names were written in heaven? In the first place, as by the right use of the law and the teaching of the Spirit, they had attained to a knowledge and sense of sin, and by the hearing of God's word had obtained the precious faith of Christ, so must they now confirm and increase this penitence and faith by the same means, for as the faith of a penitent is the instrument of our justification in the first instance, by which we lay hold on the hope set before us in Christ, so is it the instrument by which we hold fast to the same through life; for nothing that we can do in working out our salvation, is of any avail, or at all pleasing to God, without this faith. Without faith it is impossible to please God. By this faith at our first conversion, we are united to Christ. Christ dwells in our hearts by faith.* When the apostle exhorts

* This union with Christ is only one mode of representing that great moral change which always takes place in the soul at the time of its justification before God, by which we are said to become new creatures in Christ, to be born again of the word of the Spirit, to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. It is with this new birth—this new creature in Christ, as it is with our justification and adoption. So soon as it takes place it suffices for

christians to examine themselves whether they be in the faith, he adds that except Jesus Christ be in them, they are reprobates. Christians are to live by faith and endeavor that it may be a "faith that groweth exceedingly," for satan desires to have them, that he may sift them as wheat. We are to pray to him who is the Author of our faith, that he would be the Finisher of the same, and carry on the good work to the end. St. Paul says: "the life which I now live—that is, after his justification—I live by faith in the Son of God." All the means then, whereby we can be rooted, grounded, settled in the faith, must be diligently used, for it is thus only that we can abide in Christ, which is necessary to receiving "the end of our faith, even the salvation of our souls." We are required to stand fast in the Lord, after we have embraced him by faith. We can only be partakers of Christ finally and forever, by "holding fast our confidence steadfast unto the end." Our hearts must not only be made acquainted with, but kept in, the knowledge and love of God and of his Son Jesus Christ, and we must be ever growing in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. We are exhorted to "build ourselves up in the most holy faith," "to keep ourselves in the love of God," that thus "we may not fall from our steadfastness," but be ever cleaving unto Christ, "who shall confirm us unto the end, that we may be blameless in the day of Christ." St. Jude warns the christians of his day against falling, by comparing the conduct of some amongst them who turned the grace of God into licentiousness, to those Israelites whom

salvation, but if the subject of it lives in this world of sin and temptation, it must be nurtured, strengthened, matured. A child on its birth has all the parts and faculties of a man, and should it die immediately, dies and must be enrolled as a human being; but in order to its living and growing in this world, it needs much attention and nourishment. So as to the new born child of grace—it is one of God's children just as certainly the moment after its spiritual birth, as at a later date, and if it dies the next moment, will be removed to paradise; but if it remains in this evil world, it needs much to preserve life, and increase its stature, until it shall reach the stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus.

he had first delivered out of the land of Egypt, but afterwards destroyed because of their unbelief, adding: "But ye, beloved, building up yourselves in your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life," and concludes, "now unto him that is able to keep you from falling," &c. St. Paul in his sixth chapter of the epistle to the Hebrews, warns against such a deplorable loss of faith, by saying, "that it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame." He afterwards adds: "but beloved we are persuaded better things of you, and things which accompany salvation, though we thus speak. And we desire that every one of you do show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end, that ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises." Again, in the eleventh chapter: "Let us, beloved, hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised."—"for if we sin wilfully after we have come to the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins." He speaks of "those who have trodden under foot the Son of God, and have counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing, and done despite to the Spirit of grace." And again: "Now the just shall live by faith, but if any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition, but of them that believe to the saving of the soul." Now, without entering into the controversies which have arisen between pious and learned men, as to the precise meaning and application of

these passages, yet as they are acknowledged to be a part of God's word, they must be divided and applied to the best of our knowledge. By general consent they were designed for God's saints, and were intended to be used with reference to the preservation of them in that happy state, into which they entered by faith. They show what the apostle Peter meant when he said in his second epistle to "those who had obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ." "Beside all this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue, (that is, courage in professing the faith), and to virtue, knowledge, (that is, of God's word), and to knowledge, temperance, and to temperance, patience, and to patience, brotherly kindness," &c., "for if these things be in you and abound, they make you that you be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ; but he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore, the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be administered abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Wherefore, I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them and be established in the present truth." Such were the warnings delivered to those who had "obtained like precious faith," and "were established in the present truth." And such warnings have always been delivered by God's ministers, to the most faithful, as the means appointed to preserve their fidelity, and that "being faithful unto death, they might receive the crown of life." Although there be many pious and excellent divines who believe that in point of fact, those who are once truly justified and born anew of God's Spirit, never forfeit their adoption, or lose the image of God from their souls, yet I believe nearly all admit the possibility of

these things, and therefore, use the passages quoted above, as divine warnings, by which the justified are preserved, and are thus, "kept by the power of God unto salvation." It is by such warnings, by sacraments, by all the means of grace, by all the good works appointed, that he who began the good work in the soul, carries it on, until it is safely landed in heaven, where even the possibility of falling cannot be supposed to enter.*

DOCTRINE OF THE CHURCH ON THIS SUBJECT.

Let us now enquire into the sense of the Church on the necessity of holding fast that hope and life, which we have obtained so surely by faith, that if we die the next moment, we shall be saved.

In the baptismal services she teaches us to pray, "increase this knowledge and confirm this faith in us evermore"—

* I am aware that the above extracts, as well as the passages of scripture already quoted, will bring before the mind a disputed point which I am not accustomed to discuss—will suggest the question, whether God will ever revoke his forgiveness and justification, so that any who have been justified and made meet for heaven, if thus dying, may live to forfeit the same. Our homilies though often using language similar to that in the 17th article on election, certainly do seem to recognize the fact of the possibility, and the fact of a total apostacy from the faith, and loss of salvation, in the case of some who are in a state of salvation. It may be asked how these seemingly contradictory expressions and views can be reconciled. I know of no other way than by supposing that the framers of the articles and the homilies, held that those who are finally saved, and those only, come under the denomination of the elect or chosen unto eternal life, although there were others who did once so embrace the faith with penitent hearts, that if they had died in that state, they would have been admitted into heaven, but living and apostatizing, they forfeited their inheritance. It may perhaps, be said by those holding such a view, that this does not interfere with the doctrine of a special election of a certain portion who will never fall. Should it be replied that this would argue unkindness in God, in permitting such to continue in this life to the jeopardy and loss of their souls, whom he might have taken away by death, when in a state of salvation, it might be answered, that the same complaint may be made against God, for permitting little children to grow up to be men to the peril of their souls, and the certain loss of millions, when he might have saved them all by an early death. If God must, in order to meet our views of what is just and merciful, take away all children at that period, when we believe they will be saved through Christ forever, then of course there would soon be an end of the human race, or rather it would have terminated long since. The only answer to all such questions is, "Who art thou that repliest against God?"

after thanking God for "calling us to this knowledge and faith." Even after the baptism of the adult who has come truly repenting, and been made the child of God by faith, he is signed with the sign of the cross, "in token that hereafter he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified; but manfully fight under his banner, against sin, the world and the devil, and to *continue* Christ's faithful soldier and servant unto his life's end." Again: "give thy Holy Spirit to these persons, that being now born again, and made heirs of everlasting salvation, through our Lord Jesus Christ, they may continue thy servants, and attain thy promises through the same Lord Jesus Christ thy Son." In the confirmation service, where the recipients are admitted, on the condition of their having the faith and repentance of the gospel, after thanking God for the forgiveness of all their sins, the bishop prays that "they may continue thine forever;" "that in the end they may obtain everlasting life;" "that they may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." In the communion service, after thanking God for assuring us, in the Lord's supper, of his favor and goodness towards us, we are made to pray for grace, "that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as he has prepared for us to walk in." In the homily on falling from God, it is thus written: "For as God showed to all them that truly believe his gospel, his face of mercy in Christ Jesus, which doth so lighten their hearts, that they (if they behold it as they ought to do), be transformed into his image, be made partakers of his heavenly light and of his Holy Spirit, and be fashioned to him in all goodness requisite to the children of God; so, if they, after, do neglect the same, if they be unthankful to him, if they order not themselves according to his example and doctrine, and to the setting forth of his glory, he will take away from them his kingdom; his holy word whereby he should reign in them, because they bring

not forth the fruit that he looked for.” In the homily on the resurrection also, we have these words: “these things, I say, well considered, let us now, in the rest of our life, declare our faith that we have in this most fruitful article, by forming ourselves thereunto, in rising daily from sin to righteousness and holiness of life. *For what shall it avail us, saith St. Peter, to be escaped from the filthiness of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, if we be entangled again therewith, and be overcome again? Certainly it had been better, saith he, never to have known the way of righteousness, than after it is known and received, to turn back again from the holy commandment of God given unto us.* For so shall the proverb have place in us, where it is said, ‘*The dog hath returned to his own vomit again, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing again.*’ What a shame were it for us, being thus clearly and freely washed from our sin, to return to the filthiness thereof again! What a folly were it, thus endowed with righteousness to lose it again! What a madness were it, to lose the inheritance that we be now set in, for the vile and transitory pleasures of sin.” “How can we find it in our hearts to show such extreme unkindness to Christ, which hath now so gently called us to mercy, and offered himself unto us, and be now entered within us.”

In the homily on the nativity, we have these words: “*Happy are they, saith the scripture, that continue to the end. Be faithful, saith God, unto death, and I will give thee the crown of life.*” Again, he saith in another place: “he that putteth his hand to the plough, and looketh back, is not meet for the kingdom of God. Therefore, let us be steadfast, immovable, abounding always in the work of the Lord. Let us receive Christ, not for a time, but forever: let us believe his word, not for a time, but forever: let us become his servants, not for a time, but forever; in consideration that he hath redeemed and saved us, not for a time,

but forever, and will receive us into his heavenly kingdom, there to reign with him, not for a time, but forever."

It may now be asked for something more particular and full, as to the means appointed for carrying on this work in the hearts of those, who remain in this world of sin and in these bodies of death? What are the means of preserving this union with Christ, holding fast to this blessing of adoption or justification? There is abundant provision in God's word for this purpose, so that our faith may be continually strengthening, and that thus, in the day of the Lord, to use the language of our Church, "it may be found laudable, glorious and honorable to the increase of glory and endless felicity." It may be that God designs, by continuing us on earth, and exposing our faith to severe trials, to prepare us for greater glory in heaven, beside making us instruments of good to others here below. As to the means of preserving and strengthening our faith and union with Christ, and of course continuing our justification, we have already said that the same means whereby we entered the happy state, must be still used. As the law was our school-master, to bring us as penitent sinners to Christ, so must it be used to keep us in Christ. By its faithful study and application to our hearts, we must learn more and more of the desperate wickedness thereof, and so of our great need of one "who ever liveth to make intercession for us." As by the gospel, we came to the knowledge of Christ and his salvation, so by its study, must we be more and more enlightened, to see the length, and depth, and height of the love of Christ. We must read the scriptures with prayer, that we may, on that heavenly food, grow up unto Christ. We must constantly pray for that Holy Spirit which at first enabled us to call Jesus Christ our Lord. There are means of grace for daily and hourly use, either in public or private. But there are also certain and special instruments of less frequent observance, which God hath appointed, for the purpose of con-

firming and strengthening this our union with Christ, and thus insuring the continuance of God's favor. I mean the sacraments of the Church. Our Lord and his apostles often connect with faith, as necessary to salvation, a public confession, with our mouths, of that which we must first believe with our hearts. This public confession, doubtless, embraces every mode of declaring openly to our fellow-beings our faith in Christ, so that it may be seen that we are neither ashamed nor afraid to confess him. Such confession is not only necessary to confirm the faith of others, but greatly helps to strengthen our own, especially when we do it in the observance of ordinances appointed by Christ himself, and which he uses as seals to the covenant made with his disciples. The sacrament of baptism was appointed to be used at once, and but once, by the convert to christianity, as an unequivocal declaration to the whole world of his faith in Christ, and as an assurance and outward seal on God's part of that forgiveness, which his Spirit had already sealed in the heart of him who had believed in his Son. The same may be said of the Lord's supper, to be used not once only, but often through life. In both of them the two great doctrines of our religion are set forth in the most lively and impressive manner, by what the fathers and reformers called, "visible words," signs appointed by Christ himself. Those doctrines are the forgiveness of sins and purification of our hearts by the blood of Christ, applied through faith, by the Holy Ghost. In one of these sacraments, our article says, "Faith is confirmed and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." In the other, the catechism says, that the benefits received thereby, are, "The strengthening and refreshing of our souls by the body and blood of Christ, as our bodies are by the bread and wine." Not only by the first use, but also by the frequent recollection of our baptism, and by the devout observance of the Lord's supper, we are not only reminded and assured of God's great forgiveness when we

were first reconciled to him through his Son, but are also continually receiving forgiveness for our repeated transgressions, and fresh supplies of his Holy Spirit to apply the blood of his Son to the cleansing of our hearts from the stains of those sins which we are ever committing, and for the keeping down of corruptions which are still struggling for the mastery. Remission of sins must never be considered as consisting of a few acts of God, performed on certain occasions, in connection with some acts and observances on our part, but as something which is continually going on, even as our need is continual. We pray daily for forgiveness, and God daily grants it, as he does our daily bread, through whatever means and in whatever measure he pleases. To be justified is not merely once to have been forgiven and accepted, but to continue so to be, by the habitual exercise of faith on our part and by continual acts of pardoning grace on the part of God. As our sins are like a stream passing through our whole life, so God's justifying grace is as a perpetual and overflowing river of life to the soul. God causes it to flow into our souls through a thousand channels and through every moment of our lives. It is thus that faith becomes a habit of soul in us, and justification a state in which we live, neither of them entirely broken by the many sins which we commit, while we continue to hold fast to Christ. God deals with us indeed as children, and often corrects us for our sins with fatherly chastisements—for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not—but still he is our Father and we his children, unless we utterly renounce him by forsaking his Son Jesus Christ. *

* In McIlvaine's Treatise on Justification, page 148, we have the following valuable note:

It is well said by Augustine, that *our justification consists in the perpetual remission of sin*—not in a remission, once for all, at the first act of our faith, as if all future, as well as all past sins, were *then* remitted, but a remission *perpetual* as the *ever-living* intercession of Christ for us—not a justification that is interrupted, and must begin again with each new sin, any more than the intercession of the Great High Priest is intermitted, and begins again

But there is yet much in the way of exhortation to the justified believer as to his duty, not merely or chiefly for his own personal security and final salvation, but for other purposes also. There is much said in scripture about the necessity of *works*, not to our first acceptance, but to our continuance in God's favor and final salvation. We might indeed have classed the exercises of prayer, and reading God's word, and the right reception of the sacraments among them, for these are acts of man, as well as channels of grace from God. Man's body and soul must be employed in them. They are works now, just as the observance of ordinances and acts of worship were among the deeds of the law under the Jewish dispensation, by which, St. Paul says, no flesh could be justified. But as certain graces of the soul, the fruits of the Spirit, and certain acts proceeding from faith, are

with each new sin, but a justification which keeps pace with the need of it, just so long as we continue the exercise of that faith which makes us constant members of Christ, and so makes us constant partakers of his intercession. The going up of the incense out of the golden censor of our High Priest in heaven for us, is just as perpetual as the abiding in us of a living faith in his mediation. Two things always went together in the earthly sanctuary—the praying of the people without in the court of the tabernacle, and the entering of the high priest within the veil, having the censor of the incense, and the blood of atonement, to stand before the mercy seat—he *for* the people, they *in* him. Thus are these two always united in the sanctuary on high, and the outer court of “the Israel of God” here on earth. A perpetual prayer ascends from the believer—all his faith is prayer, though not all his prayer faith. While he is thus outside the veil, though joined with his faith there be perpetual imperfection, it does not break his peace; while the law is constantly laying charges against him, there is no condemnation; he continues justified, because his faith extends beyond the veil, and keeps his poor name in “the Lamb's book of Life,” and all the while, the Great High Priest is standing as St. John beheld him in vision, “at the altar before the throne, having a golden censor,” with “much incense,” offering it “with the prayer of saints.” So that when the law accuses the believer of sin, his answer is not I have been already justified in time past, but *I am now for refuge clinging to the Cross of Christ, who ever liveth to make intercession for me.* Thus, nothing can separate a believer from the love of Christ, but the unbelief that would make him cease to be a believer. “If we walk in the light, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin; that is, it never ceases to cleanse the regenerate from the sins, which they never cease in some measure or other, to commit. And if there were not a perpetual remission of our sins; or if the cleansing us from our sins by the blood of Christ, were not as perpetual as our commission of sin is, even the case of men regenerate, would be lamentable.”—Jackson's Works, iii. 292.

in common speech and writing, denominated *good works*, we have preferred to speak of them thus. Although it is clearly declared that we cannot be saved by any works of righteousness which we have done, still St. Paul says to Timothy: "This I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed be careful to maintain good works, for these things are good and profitable unto men." And St. John says: "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord, they rest from their labors and their works do follow them." For what purpose, then, are they enjoined and required? St. James says of some, that "faith wrought with their works, and by works their faith was made perfect." This he said of Abraham and Rahab, the former of whom was justified by faith and declared to be the friend of God forty years before he performed the good work, which, in a certain sense, perfected his faith, just as a tree is perfected by bearing good fruit, the fruit being the surest proof of its goodness. There are three reasons we would mention for the performance of such good works and the practice of such virtues.

1st. That we ourselves may be assured of the genuineness of our faith by the fruits of it, just as a tree is proved to be good, by the good fruit it bears, and the fountain proved to be sweet by the pure waters flowing from it.

2ndly. That others may be assured of the excellency of our faith by beholding its fruits, and thus be led to glorify God as the Author of it and them.

3rdly. That they may, by a reflex act, strengthen our faith, and thus contribute to the certainty of our salvation and to the degree of our happiness here and hereafter.

As to the first. It is most important indeed to prevent deception, that we should have something beside the inward impression of our own minds, that we are God's children. The Spirit witnesses with our spirit that we are God's children in more ways than by exciting hope and joy within us. It bids us look to the fruits of the Spirit in the dispositions

which it creates, and the actions to which it leads. Though every one who truly believeth in Christ, is certainly born of God, yet it is asked, who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God? Our overcoming the world, then, is the proof that we have the true faith. It is written also, "he that doeth righteousness is righteous." If any man love me, saith our Lord, he will keep my sayings. A good tree bringeth forth good fruit; and thus is known by its fruit. A nipping frost may destroy the fruit of a season, or a rude and violent blast may shake it from the branches, or something may injure its quality in a degree. So with the christian; he may be prevented from some acts of obedience for want of opportunity, or may fail in some things, but the good principle is in him, and will bring forth more or less of good fruit.* The vine is also used as a figure of the christian; and if its stock be good its branches, as a general rule, will bring forth good grapes; but it requires pruning and training to bring forth more abundantly. Christians, through neglect, do not bring forth as much fruit as they ought to do, and, therefore, instead of having the full assurance of hope, they stand in doubt of themselves, and others stand in doubt of them. But by cultivating the graces of charity and forgiveness, and mortifying their members upon earth, they have a strong evidence of their faith. They feel and know that they are forgiven, because they are conscious of forgiveness in their hearts towards others. Feeling love towards others, they thus know that they have passed from death unto life. This is to them a blessed proof of it, not a procuring cause. It is

* The principle of productiveness in a tree or vine is different from the branches or fruits thereof—the latter being the result of the former, and proof of the existence of the former. A young scion, however, of the best kind of fruit, and which in a few years might bear good fruit, may be cut down or broken off before it has an opportunity of so doing, or it may be removed to some distant land, and there transplanted and bear fruit, though the person rearing it may not see or enjoy the fruit. So also with the young child of grace who is grafted into Christ.

most important indeed that we should have such a sure way of settling so momentous a point ; one so necessary to our peace, and in which we should otherwise be so liable to err.*

The second reason why what are called good works should be performed by christians, is that they may have their effect upon others. God makes use of those whom he converts unto Christ as instruments for the conversion of others. Wherefore they are called the light of the world and salt of the earth, and directed, instead of hiding their light, to make it shine before men, who seeing their good works may glorify their Father in heaven ; for God desires to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. This of itself is a most important reason why good works should be required of christians, without making it necessary that they should go before our justification, and be in some measure, at least, the cause or instrument of effecting it. Let these be labors of love proceeding from faith—acts of gratitude on our part both towards God and man. God only requires of us to love him, because he first loved us,—not love him first that he may love us in return as a debt of love due to us. He will always keep us in his debt by his preventing grace. These very good works of which we speak are all wrought in us by his grace. Although he loves those who love him, he loves them for his own work of love wrought in them. †

* HOMILY ON CONTENTION.

“ For if thou forgive thy brother, being to thee a trespasser, then hast thou a sure sign and token that God will forgive thee, to whom all men be debtors and trespassers.”

† Whoever would see the practical working and wretched consequences of the doctrine of justification by works, either in part or whole, must go to the Church of Rome. As some persons do many more good works than others, although those who do the lesser number may be saved, so the opinion soon sprung up, that some did more than was absolutely necessary or required, and therefore, had some superfluous goodness which they could make over to such as were deficient of the needful amount—which works of supererogation were placed in the hands of the church for disposal, while those who had but few were continually seeking to increase their amount by unscriptural means, and some of the more scrupulous and fearful were

The third reason why good works, consisting of the graces or virtues of the soul and the exercise of them in outward action are required, is that God has so constituted us that all our faculties and affections of body and soul, and all our inward principles and outward habits, are improved and perfected by exercise. Let any of our bodily organs, or members, or any of the powers of our minds be neglected and permitted to lie dormant within us, how do they suffer and fail of their object, even though at the first they were perfect in their nature, having every capacity for development and improvement. So it is with all the graces of the new man in Christ—the child of God by faith. They must be exercised on their appropriate objects in order that they may in this unfriendly world still ripen for heaven. If we are taken away at once, so soon as they are formed in the heart, and transferred to heaven, they will find blessed exercise in that holy place without all the effort that is necessary here. Especially will the precious justifying faith of the gospel be strengthened by every good work, which it leads us to perform. No work is acceptable to God, except it is done in faith, by us as poor sinners redeemed by Christ and desiring to show our gratitude to him; nevertheless by the principle of action and reaction, that faith is strengthened in us by every act which it performs. Every good work proceeding from faith makes us more humbly cleave unto Christ for salvation and abhor the thought of claiming any thing as a reward, except it be the reward of grace. In this view of the subject, also, good works are most important means of insuring our salvation, because they are means of increasing and strengthening all the graces of our new born souls, while we are in this world. Thus we need not hesitate to recommend them, without fearing in the least to encroach on

even in fear of death, lest they should not have reached the demands of God, but have some last farthing to pay, which will require purgatorial torments as an atonement.

the glorious doctrine of justification by faith only. Nay, we are well assured that those who in the humility of faith, most abound in all good works, and in the diligent use of all the means of grace, are the very persons who most abhor the thought of salvation in any other way. They feel that they are God's workmanship, created anew in Christ Jesus unto good works, which they are endeavoring to perform on earth, while they remain here, just as those who have been taken up into heaven are performing them there, not to purchase redemption, but as acts of love and as a part of their happiness.

The scriptural view here taken of the requirement, object, and relative position of good works, is fully substantiated in the standards of our Church. Thus in the 12th article it is written, "albeit that good works which are the fruits of faith, and follow after justification, cannot put away our sins, and endure the severity of God's judgment; yet are they pleasing and acceptable to God in Christ, and do spring out necessarily of a true and lively faith; insomuch that by them a lively faith may be as evidently known, as a tree discerned by the fruit." I need not say that in all the prayers and offices of our Church, such is the position in which good works are placed in relation to faith, as being those things "which God has prepared for us to walk in," after we become his "children by faith in Christ." Whatever means we may use in obedience to God's command whereby to become his children, still according to the 13th article, "works done before the grace of Christ and the inspiration of his Spirit, are not pleasant to God, forasmuch as they spring not of faith in Jesus Christ; neither do they make men meet to receive grace, or (as the school authors say), deserve grace of congruity; yea rather, for that they are not done, as God hath willed and commanded them to be done, we doubt not but they have the nature of sin."

Our homilies on faith and good works enlarge upon and

sustain the principles set forth in the articles quoted above, declaring that nothing but a lively faith can bring forth good works, and that it necessarily does bring them forth. But then quoting from St. Chrysostom, one of them says, that it is to good works as the life of man to the nourishment of that life. "For as men, that be very men indeed, first have life, and after be nourished; so must our faith in Christ go before, and after be nourished with good works. And life may be without nourishment, but nourishment cannot be without life. A man must needs be nourished by good works, but first he must have faith. He that doeth good deeds, yet without faith he hath no life." In the homily on fasting, St. Augustine is quoted as saying, "good works then bring not forth grace, but are brought forth by grace. The wheel, saith he, turneth round, not to the end that it may be made round, but because it is first made round. So, no man doeth good works, to receive grace by his good works; but because he hath first received grace, therefore, consequently he doeth good works." And in another place he says, "good works go not before in him which shall afterwards be justified, but good works do follow after when a man is first justified. St. Paul therefore teacheth that we must do good works for divers respects. 1st. To show ourselves obedient children to our heavenly Father, who hath ordained them that we should walk in them. 2ndly. For that they are good declarations and testimonies of our justification. 3dly. That others, seeing our good works, may the rather by them be stirred up and encited to glorify our Father which is in heaven. Let us not, therefore, be slack to do good works, seeing it is the will of God that we should walk in them, assuring ourselves, that at the last day every man shall receive of God for his labor done in true faith, a greater reward than his works have deserved." In the homily on alms deeds, we have the same doctrine declared. "Amongst the manifold duties which Almighty God re-

quireth of his faithful servants, the true christians, by the which he would that his name be glorified, and the certainty of their vocation declared, there is none that is either more acceptable to him or profitable to them, than are the works of mercy and piety shewed unto the poor, which be afflicted with any kind of misery." And for this cause doth the Almighty God say unto Moses '*the land wherein ye dwell shall never be without poor men,*' because he would have continual trial of his people, whether they loved him or no, that in shewing themselves obedient unto his will, they might certainly assure themselves of his love and favor towards them." It then adduces a number of these promises of God to the charitable which seem to ascribe remission of sin to their alms-giving, but adds "ye shall understand, dearly beloved, that neither those places of scripture before alleged, neither the doctrine of the blessed martyr Cyprian, neither any other godly and learned men, when they are extolling the dignity, fruit, and effect of virtuous and liberal alms, do say that it washeth away sins, and bringeth us to the favor of God, do mean that our works and charitable deeds, is the original cause of our acception before God, or for the dignity or worthiness thereof, our sins may be washed away, and we purged and cleansed of all the spots of our iniquity; for that were indeed to deface Christ, and to deprive him of his glory."

The homily against the fear of death, also sets forth one of the reasons why God continues his children for a time in this world—viz: that they may live unto the Lord—"Even like as St. Martin said, Good Lord if I be necessary for thy people to do good unto them, I will refuse no labor; but else, for mine own sake, I beseech thee to take away my soul." "Therefore let us diligently foresee that our faith and hope which we have conceived in Almighty God, and in our Saviour Christ, wax not faint, nor the love which we bear to our brother wax not cold; but let us study daily and diligently

to shew ourselves to be the true honorers of God, by keeping his commandments, by doing of good deeds, unto our needy neighbors," &c. But throughout the homilies we are warned that if we do any thing under the expectation that it will promote our salvation, except for the merits of Christ, it is abomination before God. "Such a fast as that is so far from pleasing to God, that it refuseth his mercy and is altogether derogatory to Christ's death." "Now because the Pharisee directeth his works to an evil end, seeking by them justification, which is the proper work of God, without our merits, his fasting twice in the week and all his other works, though they were never so many and seemed to the world never so holy and good, yet in very deed before God they were altogether evil and abominable." See the homily on fasting.

CONCLUSION.

I have dwelt so long on the three great portions into which the human family must be divided, viz: those who are below the age of discretion, the justified and the condemned who are above it, and said so much as to the manner in which God's word is to be meted out to them, that I can only briefly and generally allude to the use which is to be made of scripture, in its wonderful adaptation to all the varieties of the human character, and to all the circumstances of man. Its many and precious promises, its many and awful threatenings, must all be faithfully applied by the minister of God. All its moral precepts, all the holy duties it inculcates, all the social affections it enjoins, and relative obligations it imposes, must receive their due attention. The proverbs of Solomon must not be laid aside to make way for the sublime doctrines of St. Paul. Because life and immortality are brought to light by the gospel, as though scarce revealed to the Jew amidst his temporal promises, we must not forget that godliness has the promise of the life that now

is, as well as that which is to come, nor neglect to urge every duty and every virtue, as promotive of our present happiness and welfare, though ever reminding our hearers that except they be done with a view to heaven and from the love of God, they may have their reward, but it will not be the righteous man's reward. We must not fail to observe in what a variety of lights the same blessed truths and pure precepts are presented to us, throughout the wide range of scripture, in order to delight as well as edify us the more, and should remember that if any man undertake to speak, he must speak not merely as to doctrine, but as to manner, as the oracles of God. We cannot improve upon the manner any more than upon the matter of the Holy Ghost. We must, as preachers, no more take from the word of God, by confining ourselves to certain parts, than we must add to it. Our Church requires us to read abundantly from the whole of it, and we should in like manner, preach from the whole, enriching our sermons not only with the words of the Holy Ghost, but with all the facts, and precepts, and parables of scripture. Because some of the doctrines and commandments are manifestly more important than others, and should, therefore, be more emphatically pressed upon our hearers, it does not follow that any are to be neglected. Because it is written of St. Paul, as though it embraced all he said, "that he preached Christ," unto the people; although he felt clear from the blood of all men, when he had urged upon them, "repentance towards God and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ;" although he resolved, "to know nothing among men but Jesus Christ and him crucified," yet we must let him explain his own meaning. Let his epistles, those inspired sermons, shew what he meant by preaching the gospel. What variety, what comprehensiveness, what abundant illustration from the Old Testament, what powerful appeals to reason, what addresses to all description of persons, what warnings to the sinner, what encouragements to saints,

what a clustering of moral precepts, do we find in all his epistles, making them the most perfect models of pulpit discourses. While, therefore, we ground all our discourses on the same foundation with his, namely, the justification of sinners by the righteousness of Christ, received through faith, let us be sure and build upon that foundation the same superstructure of good works, which is seen so prominent, so beautiful in all his writings. While, with him, we call upon all men to repent and believe in Christ, as their only hope, and as a sure hope of acceptance with God, let us exhort all such as have believed, to make their calling and election sure, by adding to their faith all the fruits of the Spirit, and using all the means of grace most diligently, that so, they may never fall, but be of those who believe to the saving of their souls. Let us follow him as our pattern also, in the remarkable variety of his illustrations, drawn from all the scriptures of God. To select only one or two points of doctrine, and one or two modes of address from the sacred preachers, no matter how all important, and to dwell almost exclusively, or with undue emphasis on them, is not rightly to divide the word of truth. No matter how ably or eloquently we may present them, and though God may bless such portion of his word, still it is not doing justice to the whole or to our hearers. The deficiency will be felt and seen. Though sinners may be awakened, saints will not be perfected. If good works be not urged, they will, in a great measure, be neglected, and if loss of the soul be not the result, still God will not be glorified as he should be, we shall not be as holy and happy as we might be on earth, and even the joy of heaven may not be as full as it might be.

I have thus, my dear brethren, in much bodily infirmity, and able to do nought else, and scarcely this, most imperfectly set forth for our common benefit the result of my thoughts and reading as to the duty enjoined by the text, enforcing

the same by some authorities, on which, next to God's word, I rely for your favorable reception of this charge.

That you are already accustomed thus to preach the truth as it is in Jesus, I doubt not; I only write to stir up your minds, by way of remembrance, lest in this day of temptation, it be with any of you, even though only in a slight degree, as with some of old, who "having begun in the Spirit, seemed as if they would now seek to be made perfect by the flesh." That God's blessing may rest on your labors more and more, is the prayer of your friend and brother in Christ.

WILLIAM MEADE.

APPENDIX ON BAPTISMAL JUSTIFICATION.

There are those not only in the Romish church, but even among protestants, who object to the view maintained in the foregoing pages, and maintain, that instead of justification occurring at the time of the exercise of faith in Christ by a repenting sinner, and through its instrumentality, it takes place at the time and by the instrumentality of baptism, and not before, or after—that the promise of remission of sins belongs to us at that time, and in that act only, though not without the concurrence of faith in the adult—and that there is no scriptural warrant for our acceptance, justification and salvation, without baptism, because Christ has said that he who believeth and is baptized shall be saved, and that we must be born of water, as well as of the Spirit. There are others who confine baptismal justification to the case of infants. To us, there appear to be insuperable difficulties in either case. If adults capable of exercising faith are so frequently said, in the New Testament, to be justified by faith, to be forgiven when they believe, to become the children of God by faith in Christ, it is strange when such kind notices are taken of children, that it should never have been expressly said that they are justified at their baptism, and that the children of the Jews before them were justified at their circumcision. If such be the doctrine of our Church also, is it not strange that in the article on baptism, which sets forth its designs and benefits, after speaking of its being a means, by virtue of prayer, of increasing the grace and confirming the faith of the adult, it should only add that the

“baptism of children is in any wise to be retained in the church as most agreeable to the institution of Christ?” What an opportunity was there lost for declaring that children were justified at their baptism? Again, when, in the article on justification, it is expressly declared that we are justified “only for the merit of our Lord Jesus Christ by faith,” and again, “that we are justified by faith only,” how could the framers have omitted to make an exception in the case of infants, and say, that they, unable to exercise faith, were justified for the merits of Christ by baptism, and by baptism only, lest they should even seem to exclude them, if they die before they can have faith, from the hope of the justified? It would be well, also, to consider the position in which our Church would be placed, if this doctrine of baptismal justification of infants be maintained. At the time the article was drawn up, there were so few unbaptized adults, almost all having been baptized in infancy, that no office for adult baptism was then prepared, nor for a long time afterward; and yet, on this theory, though almost all had been justified at their baptism in infancy, and scarce any were left to be justified by faith, not only is there an article on justification by faith only, without the least mention of the case of the overwhelming number of infants otherwise and already justified, but our homilies and all the writings of the reformers are full of the doctrine of justification by faith only: so that it was then, and ever has been, considered by Romanists and protestants as the great distinguishing doctrine of the Reformation. Strange, indeed, that this should be so, if only a few, very few individuals here and there, could be found who needed the benefit of this doctrine, because their baptism had been neglected, or they were converts from paganism. Verily, this would be an illustration of the fable, “montes parturiunt,” etc.

And now as to those who maintain, in opposition to the doctrine of justification by faith only, and at the time the

penitent believer first embraces Christ as his Saviour, and assert that such honor belongs to the time and act of baptism, though faith must accompany, they will find it as difficult to settle their difference with St. James as with St. Paul, who are thought by some to vary in their statements. St. James certainly connects the word justification with something else than circumcision, or baptism; declaring that Abraham and Rahab were justified by works, which works were specified, and were quite different, both as to their character and the time of their performance, from the sacrament of circumcision. Abraham, according to St. James, and St. Paul, and the Old Testament, had been justified by faith forty years, and been circumcised sixteen years, before his offering of Isaac, by which work St. James says he was also justified. Now, if St. James is to be quoted against the doctrine of one justification by faith only, he still cannot be quoted in favor of justification in baptism only, for he is speaking of other works, and might, with more plausibility, be quoted in favor of the doctrine of various and successive justifications, or progressive justification. I need not here stop to say, that all sound commentators have found no difficulty in reconciling the apparent contradiction between the two apostles. St. James certainly does not appear to object to St. Paul's doctrine, or language, but sustains both, using his very language in one sentence, and saying, that "Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for righteousness, and he was called the friend of God." He was only protesting against the corruption of it, and the substitution of a dead faith for that living faith by which Abraham was justified, and by which he performed acts that in a certain sense justified him: that is, by proving to himself and others that he was justified, and by which his own faith was strengthened, as every inward principle is strengthened by exercise and action. Thus "faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect." He proved by his obedience

to God in relation to his son Isaac, that his was still a strong, undoubting faith, and that even though he should slay that son, God was still faithful, and would bring to pass what he had promised.

But there are those who would not use the term justification as due to baptism, whether in relation to infants or adults, and yet will say we have no scriptural warrant for our justification and salvation, except we be baptized; thus giving encouragement to the doctrine of baptismal justification. In all ages there have been some disposed to such extreme views, and who think that the strong language of our Lord and the apostles seems to require it,—that we have no right to make exceptions where the scripture does not.

Before considering whether scripture compared with scripture, and rightly understood, does not justify such exceptions, and require the same, lest we cast dishonor on God, I would remark, that the charge, if just, falls heavily on our own Church; for notwithstanding all the strong expressions in scripture as to the sacraments, and of baptism especially, she undertakes to say in our catechism that they are only “generally necessary to salvation,” in opposition to the church of Rome, which declares that “they are absolutely necessary.” In the service for adult baptism also, after quoting the words of our Lord, “except a man be born of water and of the Spirit he cannot see the kingdom of God,” she immediately adds, “whereby ye may perceive *the great necessity of this sacrament where it may be had.*” In venturing, therefore, to make the same comment on such scriptures, we do not show ourselves undutiful sons of the Church, either of this day, or of the days preceding the ages of thick darkness and deep corruption. Nothing is more common among the fathers of the first ages, than the acknowledgment that there were many exceptions to the general rule,—that, indeed, nothing but the wilful contempt of baptism could leave us without excuse. It was the uni-

versal sentiment, that in relation to martyrs who were executed before they could be baptized, that they were baptized in their own blood, which was accepted of God in place of the baptism of water. Now, although there is nothing in scripture to justify the substitution of our blood for the water of baptism, or of our blood for the wine of the Lord's supper, and though we think it would have been far better simply to say, that their faith and desire to comply with all God's commandments were accepted of them, yet we certainly admire and vindicate the principle which led to the use of such language. In relation to the Lord's supper, our Church acts on the same principle in declaring, that when unable to obtain the symbols from the minister of God, the exercise of faith on our sick bed makes us as really partakers of the body and blood of Christ as though we had received the bread and wine. And now, as to the assertion that we have no scriptural warrant for our salvation except we be baptized, those who make it, or entertain the opinion, would do well to remember, that if we have no scriptural warrant for the salvation of any who die unbaptized, then we have no warrant at all, for we dare not trust to reason or natural religion on this subject. God's will and promises, as seen in his word, and there only, are to be relied on. But then God designs that we should exercise our reason in studying his word and finding out the various ways in which he makes known his mind to us, and delivers his precious promises. We are bound to receive his assurance in whatever manner he is pleased to give it. Some things are spoken in so many express words, so that none can misunderstand them, there being no other words which ever seem to be at variance. Other things may be fairly inferred from the record of his acts and from the analogy of faith. The very baptism of children,—the participation of the Lord's supper by females,—the christian Sabbath,—are rather to be inferred from acts and previous dispensations, not being enjoined

in so many words; and yet none of us doubt the scriptural warrant we have for them. Our Church, though not pleading the positive command of Christ to baptize infants, but saying that "it is in any wise to be retained as most agreeable to the institution of Christ," yet says we must bring them "nothing doubting but that he favorably alloweth this charitable work." Whatever, therefore, may be plainly inferred from scripture, and from God's dealings with his people recorded therein, has the warrant of scripture. We may believe too little, by requiring that God shall speak to us in the precise way we prefer, and not that which he chooses. He means to exercise our faith as well as our reason. If God has sometimes connected baptism with the forgiveness of sins in such a way as to bind it upon us as a duty, and if there be a scriptural warrant to those who believe and are baptized, we should examine the scripture and see if a warrant for the salvation of some who are not baptized is not to found therein,—whether he who has given the rule has not made exceptions, and whether such exceptions are not so manifestly implied, that we cannot affirm of penitent believers dying unbaptized that they have no scriptural warrant for their hope. This method of interpreting scripture is, I believe, universally admitted amongst its best commentators. Our scriptural warrant for salvation, we conceive, must be in proportion as we possess those graces most approved of God, and to which his promises are most clearly and emphatically made. In view of this, when we so often find that salvation is promised most undoubtedly to the penitent believer without mention of anything else save his faith, and when this must have preceded everything else,—when we remember how many circumstances may occur to prevent baptism—how many true believers have died without it—how the last act of our Lord was to assure a dying but unbaptized penitent of his forgiveness—how many children die unbaptized without any fault of their

own, and many too, without the fault of parents, but of necessity—when we remember how many adults and infants died in the wilderness without the corresponding sacrament under the Old Testament, and without rebuke on the part of God—have we no scriptural warrant for believing that any such can be saved, no matter how clearly God declares his love to children, saying, “of such is the kingdom of heaven,” no matter how plainly he promises his kingdom to such adults as have the graces of the inner man, to which God’s blessings are assured ; then must we say that we have no scriptural warrant for many other precious privileges. If any say, as is said by some, that this is a more tangible, perceptible rule by which to decide on our justification, than that of inward consciousness—that this is a fact, not a feeling, by which it may be determined whether our sins be forgiven,—let them remember that in order to baptism being a justifying ordinance to us, we must partake of it worthily ; that is, with faith and penitence ; so that we cannot get rid of the supposed difficulty, for we must determine for ourselves whether we have the right inward consciousness of faith before we can be justified in baptism. This rule, however, would soon be dispensed with, and we should come to the conclusion that baptism being so absolutely necessary to salvation, not merely infants, but also the adult had better be baptized at any rate for fear of sudden death, no matter how feeble his faith. Nay, the rule would soon be as in the Romish church—not if thou believest with all thine heart—but only, if there be not positive infidelity, then, thou mayest be baptized.

Let me add, that the experience of the most truly pious christians agrees with the view I have presented. When they, under the teaching of God’s word and Spirit, have obtained this precious faith, they, for the most part, feel that their sins are forgiven—their peace made with God through Christ ; then, if not before baptized, they ask for christians

baptism, now as of old, as an act of obedience and duty, as a public declaration of their faith, and also, as a scriptural warrant for their hope in Christ; not the first and only warrant, but another scriptural warrant to assure their hearts still more of his forgiveness. Abraham received the solemn assurance of his acceptance three times in twenty four years, the third being accompanied by the seal of circumcision. But had he no divine assurance until then, that he was the friend of God? The Jews received assurance of God's covenanting love in Egypt, when they were baptized in the Red Sea, at Mount Sinai, and when they passed over Jordan. Now when God promises, and then, at various times and in various ways, renews his promises, shall we select one of those ways and times, and maintain that his first great promise is of no avail without this; especially when the subsequent promises are made only to confirm the first, and prepare us for the enjoyment of the promised blessing. God's oath to bless Abraham, after his act of obedience in offering up Isaac, was long after his acceptance of him on account of his faith, and the renewal of the same on other occasions. It was not a justification which had just begun, having been postponed until this act; but only a renewal of it—a re-assurance with an oath, to “shew more abundantly to the heirs of promise,” that what he had promised should be performed. So it is with baptism, the Lord's supper and all other religious observances, God's promises to which are only repetitions and oaths added to the assurances made to repentance and faith, which were sufficient for the time, had death removed the subjects thereof.

This leads me to the repetition of a remark before made, that in my humble judgment, much of the error prevailing on this subject arises from not rightly dividing the word of God on the subject of the gifts of his Spirit, and the forgiveness of sins, between those exercises of the mind, and

means of grace, and works of faith, which from time to time take place, and to which his promises are made. A casual, superficial reader of the scriptures, and of the writings of the fathers and reformers, might be excused for supposing that these writings seemed to be inconsistent with themselves, when, in speaking on these several means of grace, they used such strong and apparently exclusive language as to their individual efficacy, but ministers of religion ought not to need such excuse, but comparing scripture with scripture, and other writings with themselves, find out the true meaning and limitation of all such passages.* Now the scriptures speak of God as being reconciled to the human race

* In proof of the necessity of adopting the same rule with all other writings, in order to find out their true meaning, which we use with scripture when we "compare scripture with scripture"—I would refer the reader to what our homily on the Lord's Supper says of its efficacy, with what the homily on reading of scripture says of the power of God's word. In the former, it is said, the ancient Fathers "were not afraid to call this supper, some of them the salve of immortality, the healthful grace, and the conservatory to everlasting life." All these sayings it declares to be true, that is, if we are found "always holding fast and cleaving by faith to the rock, whence we may suck the sweetness of everlasting salvation;" thus will "God's mercies be sealed unto us, and the satisfaction by Christ towards us confirmed, and the remission of sin established"—but we must first "wash ourselves with the living waters of God's word" in order to these happy effects. If we now turn to the homily on reading scripture, the first in the book, we find the same things said of God's word—"for the scripture of God is the heavenly meat of our souls; the hearing and keeping of it maketh us blessed, sanctifieth us and maketh us holy; it turneth our souls, it is a light lantern unto our feet; it is a sure, steadfast and everlasting instrument of our salvation." Again, "the words of holy scripture be called words of everlasting life, for they be God's instrument ordained for the same purpose. They have power to turn through God's promise and they be effectual through God's assistance, and being received into a faithful heart, they have even a *heavenly spiritual working in them.*" When, therefore, the sacraments are said to work invisibly in the hearts of the faithful, it is only what the Church says of the word read and heard, which word is set forth in an impressive manner in the sacraments, by which God repeats emphatically what he has spoken in the word. Thus our homily on the sacraments says, that "circumcision was a sacrament which *preached* unto the outward senses the inward cutting away of the foreskin of the heart, and sealed and made sure in the hearts of the circumcised, the promise of God touching the promised seed that they looked for." In the same homily it is said that absolution—that is, the declaration of God's word of his forgiveness to penitent believers—has the promise of forgiveness annexed to it, as well as the sacraments, only that it has no visible sign expressly commanded to be used with it, as baptism and the Lord's supper have.

through the death of Christ, as promising forgiveness of sins, and the Holy Spirit to the children of the covenant through that death, as applying them to the penitent and believing as soon as they become so, as continuing them to prayer, to the reading of God's word with faith—to baptism, the Lord's supper, alms giving, forgiveness of injuries, and all good works, provided the spirit of faith is in them, since, without that, they are all lifeless and unacceptable before God. The life we live we must live by faith in the Son of God; we must do all things heartily as unto the Lord, still feeling that we are unprofitable servants, and casting ourselves on the alone mercy of God through Christ. We find this same character pervading the writings of the fathers and reformers, who, although they sometimes in writing on one topic, seem to ascribe the gift of the Spirit and of forgiveness altogether to it, yet fully explain themselves elsewhere, and shew that it is only one measure of the Spirit of which they are speaking. Thus, they speak of Christ's delivering himself to us, and bestowing forgiveness, first and chiefly, in dying for us—then in his word, then in baptism, then in the Lord's supper. However strongly they may speak of remission of sins, and the gift of the Spirit being bestowed in baptism and the Lord's supper, it is only as measures and renewals of the same previously given when we receive him by faith, or granted to children by reason of the promise made to the faithful and their seed, and by virtue of Christ's death. In like manner we find promises of the Spirit and of forgiveness of sins connected, as in scripture, with good works, as almsgiving, forgiveness of injuries, but always on the condition that the humble faith to which they were first given, is in active exercise in all these things, is the very life of them, and is still the instrument by which the soul keeps fast hold of the gift. The same may be said of our prayer book and homilies. Let any one read our baptismal offices, our communion service, our confirmation service, our absolu-

tion, and see how the gifts of the Spirit and forgiveness of sins, though in the first instance granted to faith, are renewed to them, if faith still be present and active. A measure of the Holy Spirit, is an expression borrowed from scripture, and often used in our prayers, shewing clearly the understanding of our Church in regard to the subject. Although our souls are washed in the blood of Jesus, and our sins pardoned, when we first truly receive him by faith into penitent hearts, yet in baptism, the Lord's supper, when hearing the word preached, or reading it with faith, or listening to the absolution pronounced with penitent hearts, our souls are again and again washed in his blood, and our sins pardoned. It is thus and thus only, we can understand how we are justified by faith only, and yet receive the promises made to all the acts of obedient faith, required of us, if our lives are continued in these bodies of sin, and in this evil world. To say that we are justified in baptism, or in any other ordinance, except in this way, is to obscure and pervert the most precious doctrines of our faith.*

There is one mode of representing and of recommending the doctrine of baptismal justification, concerning which we would yet make a few remarks. It is not a new one, having been used by Waterland and others, though it has of late years been much resorted to in defence of the doctrine. It is as follows: acknowledging the necessity of faith in order to our justification, and admitting the propriety of calling it

*On this subject, the words of Bishop Burnet, who was very far from pushing the doctrine of justification by faith to an extreme, may well be adduced. "The doctrine of sacramental justification, is justly to be reckoned among the most mischievous of the practical errors of the Church of Rome. Since, therefore, this is nowhere mentioned in all those large discourses that are in the New Testament concerning justification, we have just reason to reject it. Since, also, the natural consequence of this doctrine is to make men rest contented in low and imperfect acts, when they can be so easily made, by a sacrament, we have just reason to detest it as one of the depths of Satan; the tendency of it being to make those ordinances of the gospel, which were given us as means to raise and heighten our faith and repentance, become engines to encourage sloth and impenitence." Exposition of the 11th article.

the hand of the soul by which we receive forgiveness and justification from Christ, as our Saviour, it says, that baptism is the hand of Christ by which he delivers it to us, though we receive it by the hand of faith; and, therefore, baptism is essential to our justification, or that we are justified by, or in our baptism. There is something seemingly plausible in this, but nothing more, as a slight examination will shew. The difficulties attending it, are many and insuperable. Besides having no scripture for its support, it interferes most seriously with the claims of other means ordained of God for granting the blessings of forgiveness to his believing and penitent children. If God must have a sacrament as his hand to communicate his forgiveness and acceptance, and cannot directly by his Spirit receive the application of faith and grant the blessing, recording the name in his book of remembrance, and sending an answer of peace to the soul by the Spirit and through the word of promise written in his scripture, do we not seriously interfere with the word as a medium of intercourse between us and heaven? When Abraham believed, and became the friend of God, and was justified by the declaration of God, where was there any outward medium or hand of God for conveying the blessing unto him? The sacrament of circumcision was not administered until twenty-four years afterwards. Was he only half justified or not justified at all during all that time, and was he not within the covenant during all that period? The apostle tells us that he was justified while in uncircumcision, and by faith, just as we are justified by the same faith of our father Abraham. Again, if baptism be the hand by which God reaches down forgiveness to us, we must surely allow that the Lord's supper is another hand by which he does the same, for the promise of forgiveness is connected with that also. So when the minister reads the absolution, declaring and pronouncing to the people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins, forgive-

ness is also theirs; and the same is true of the word preached from the pulpit or read from the desk, if heard with penitent believing hearts. So, also, is forgiveness connected with almsgiving and the forgiveness of injuries, if a right faith is active in the soul. So, also, with prayer, else why do we daily pray for forgiveness in the words our Lord himself taught us. Now in some of these means which God hath appointed, there is no material sign, no sacrament through which God conveys his Spirit and forgiveness, but only a direct invisible address of the soul to God, and a sure promise in his word that the soul shall be blessed. He, in whom is no variableness, now, as when on earth, hears the prayer of faith, and without the use of clay, or the hem of his garment, says, "according to thy faith be it unto thee, thy sins are forgiven, go in peace, sin no more;" and as they of old felt that they were healed and their sins forgiven, and went their way rejoicing, so is it now with those who come unto God by faith—"being justified by faith, they have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." God has not bound himself to a sacrament in order to the dispensing of his blessings, nor will he permit man to do it, and the attempt will ever be fraught with mischief. The Romish church and some calling themselves protestants, have carried out this theory so far as to make baptism even the necessary medium of saving faith; affirming, that our faith before baptism, is not faith—or is a mere dead faith until quickened by baptism, so do they maintain that we cannot, by faith, spiritually partake of the body and blood of Christ, except through the consecrated emblems. Not so does our protestant Church lead us to think of either sacrament. She considers them both as assurances, helps, renewals of something before possessed by faith—means of more grace, and of continued forgiveness. We must regard them as seals to a covenant, or a title to an estate, whether in reference to adult believers, or the children of the Church by birth and inheri-

tance. When a contract is made between man and man touching earthly possessions, there is first an agreement in words and promises which binds all honorable men; then it is committed to writing for many obvious reasons; money is paid, the property is transferred, possession given, last of all a deed or title is made, and a seal put to the contract, to ensure the purchase against all claims, and to give legal possession, though in a court of equity they might not be absolutely necessary, long possession, and other proof that the property had been fairly obtained, being regarded as sufficient. A father often gives to his children valuable property; puts them in possession of it; they have and use it on the strength of the father's gift, and not until his death, perhaps, have they any thing else than his promise and the right of possession. In his will he gives them a legal title, which may secure them against all other claimants. And should we not regard God as our tender Father, who has graciously bestowed an inheritance upon us on account of his Son Jesus Christ, through faith in him, and assures us of it in his word, and then seeing the weakness of our faith, in answer to the prayer, "Lord we believe, help our unbelief," bids us receive yet further assurance through his sacraments, and thus have our faith increased and all our graces improved?

I shall only say, in conclusion, that the doctrine of God's tying his forgiving love to a sacrament, or making that the hand which he reaches out to communicate his first great act of forgiveness to the soul, is entirely contrary to the opinions of our leading reformers. They not only represent justification as the act of God in behalf of the believing penitent, and through his faith only, but they speak in the clearest manner of the virtue of Christ's death being applied to infants before baptism, and when incapable of faith. Thus Philpot, one of the early reformers, says, that "infants ought to be baptized, because they are partakers of the

promise, by their *purification in Christ*," "for we judge the people of God as well by the liberal promise of God, as by the confession of faith." "The gospel is more than baptism; but children are received by the doctrine of the gospel, and not refused; what person, then, being of reason, may deny them baptism, which is a thing lesser than the gospel." Bishop Hooper says: "All sacraments appertain unto none but such as first receive the promise of God; that is, the remission of sin in Christ's blood." "The ungodly opinion which attributeth the salvation of man unto the receiving of an external sacrament, doth derogate the mercy of God, as though his Holy Spirit could not be carried into the penitent and sorrowful conscience, unless it rid always in a chariot or external sacrament." The right of the children of believers to baptism, he grounds on their acceptance by Christ, and being reputed believers by God; and baptism is added, to "manifest and open to the world, that this child is God's." Becon, chaplain of Archbishop Cranmer, whose writings abound with strong passages in favor of baptism, nevertheless, says, "The children of the Jews were counted for the promise sake, the sons and heirs of God, and were circumcised; so should the infants of the christian be baptized, as God is the God of christians and their children." He alleges as a reason in favor of infant circumcision and baptism, that God has previously given them his Holy Spirit. He says: "God does not save us for this outward baptism, but for his gracious promise. He will receive the children of the christian to everlasting life, because they be members of his church, though they chance to die without baptism." "The grace and Spirit of God cometh when and where it pleaseth God; they be not bound to any external ceremony, which is nothing else but to bring God into bondage of his creatures, and to make him not master of his own. Hereof, then, we may learn that the sacraments be an outward witness to all the congregation, of the grace which is given

privately to every man ; so that through baptism, the congregation of God receiveth the infant into the church of Christ, which was received before through the grace of his promise." The reader is referred for a further exposition of the views of the reformers, to the third chapter of the Author's treatise on the "Font and Pulpit ;" but from the above it is most evident, that the writers quoted, considered the gift of God's Spirit and forgiveness of sins, as belonging to children by virtue of Christ's death and the promise, previous to any baptism. They do not, indeed, call it justification, carefully avoiding the use of that term, as do our articles, offices, homilies, and appropriating it to that act of God in the acceptance of an adult, when he has by a deliberate exercise of faith embraced the salvation of Christ. In this, they have faithfully followed St. Paul, who confines himself in the use of that term, to the time when we became the children of God by faith in Christ, at which time we became new creatures in Christ. *

* It will be seen that in the foregoing pages, the author has not been careful to distinguish between the scriptural terms *justification* and *pardon*, *forgiveness*, and *remission of sins*, but has used them sometimes as synonymous expressions. In this, he has followed the example of high authorities, who have, nevertheless, at times shown, that they recognized an important distinction when defining with theological accuracy the whole plan of salvation. Forgiveness, or remission, or pardon, is a necessary part of justification, and so important that the part is often put for the whole by a very common figure of speech. These, however, refer strictly to the release from the penalty due to sin, although the release never takes place without something more, which is comprehended in justification, viz;—our acceptance, adoption, being accounted righteous through the merits of Christ, and not merely saved from hell, but assured of heaven. The words pardon, forgiveness, remission, are certain words in scripture to declare special acts of release from transgression and the penalty thereby incurred. But the word justification as used by the apostle Paul and adopted into our articles and homilies, refers solely to the great release from condemnation when we first believe in Jesus Christ and cast ourselves on his atoning mercies.

SENTIMENTS OF THE ENGLISH REFORMERS AND OTHERS.

I cannot but believe that the following testimonies, collected with some care, will be acceptable to my brethren, and serve to strengthen them, as they have myself, in the views we already hold.

The doctrine of the reformers, and of the Church in their day, on the subject of the sacraments, is thus declared in Dean Noel's catechism, a work of high authority in the early days of the Reformation. A sacrament is a sign "by which the promises of God touching forgiveness of sins, and eternal salvation given through Christ, are, as it were, sealed, and the truth of them is *more certainly confirmed* in our hearts." We must come to them in faith, or we go away empty. Children are admitted to baptism without faith, because of God's promise, by which forgiveness of sins and the Holy Ghost are theirs. "Therefore, most great reason it is that by baptism, as by the print of a seal, it be assured to our infants that they be heirs of God's grace, and of the salvation promised to the faithful." Christ gives himself to us in both the sacraments, and through them bestows on the believing and penitent, forgiveness of sins, and his Holy Spirit, but then not for the first time, or exclusively, or chiefly. "Christ did then principally give himself to us to be the author of our salvation, when he gave himself to death for us, that we should not perish with deserved death. By the gospel he also giveth himself to the faithful, and plainly teacheth that he is that living bread that came down from heaven to nourish their souls who believe in him. And also in baptism, as is before said, Christ gave himself to us effectually for that he then made us christians." In opposition to those who regarded baptism as a mere ineffectual sign, it says, "Christ gives himself effectually to us in

baptism," though he had previously given himself to us by his death and by his word. Our article calls both sacraments "effectual signs" in the same manner. In baptism we become christians by being grafted into the body of Christ's church, and sealed with the outward seal of Christ, and declaring ourselves to be the followers of Christ. Those who are conversant with the writings of the reformers, well know that in speaking of the sacraments, and the divine gifts attending them to the faithful receiver, they are to be understood as the renewal of spiritual blessings previously granted to the true believer, and to the seed of the faithful at their birth, or before it. In baptism we see a most precious sacramental reassurance that the death of Christ has so washed away original sin, that it shall not be unto the condemnation of our children dying in infancy, and that neither it nor his own actual sins, if repented of, shall be imputed to the adult coming to it in faith, or receiving and using his infant baptism in true faith. The same may be said of the sacrament of the Lord's supper—that it is only a renewal of our faith and of God's mercies. When the reformers speak so continually as they do of faith being necessary to the efficacy of both sacraments, although baptism was scarcely ever in their day administered to those who were capable of faith, almost all being baptized in infancy, it is evident that they considered all ineffectual and vain, unless faith owned the act by going backward to the past baptism, even as a believing unbaptized adult comes forward to that which is before him. Both of the sacraments seem to be before the minds of the reformers, as if neither had been observed, and each must be approached in the same spirit, in order to receive the promised blessing.

To this general view we add the declarations of the following persons:—

BISHOP HOOPER.

And these sacraments by faith doth applicate and apply outwardly unto him that in faith receiveth them, the same

grace, the mercy, the same benefits that is represented by the sacraments; but not so by the ministration of the sacraments, as though they that received them were not before assured of the same graces and benefits represented by the sacraments. That were a manifest error; for in case the sacraments could give us very Christ, the promises of God were in vain, the which always appertain unto the people of God before they receive any sacrament; but they be the testimonies of promise, and declare unto us for an infallible verity, and unto the church of Christ, that we be the people that God hath chosen unto his mercy, and that by faith we possessed before Christ, and in faith, friendship and amity with God, we receive these sacraments, which are nothing else but a badge and open sign of God's favor to us, and that we by this livery declare ourselves to live and die in his faith against the devil, the world and sin. But he that supposeth to make Christ his, and all his merits his, by receiving the outward sign and sacrament, and bringeth not Christ in his heart to the sacrament, he may make himself assured rather of the devil and eternal death, as Judas and Cain did. For the sacrament maketh not the union, peace and concord between God and us, but it ratifieth, stablisheth and confirmeth the love and peace that is between us and God before, for his promise sake.—*Early Writings of Bishop Hooper*, p. 127–28, *Parker Library*.

BISHOP COVERDALE.

“Here also we learn how faithful believers use themselves in the outward sacraments. They that being moved by the Holy Ghost in their hearts, do hear the eternal word preached, giving credit to it, and gladly receiving it, these do not afterwards despise the outward sacraments, which God hath instituted for the welfare of his church, but use the same with all obedience, good will and reverence.” “These tokens of grace doth no man use more devoutly, and with

more reverence, than he that in himself is certified and assured of the gracious favor of God; as we see in Cornelius, in Paul, and in Queen Candace's chamberlain."—*Works of Coverdale*, p. 411, *Parker Library*.

BISHOP HOOPER.

"Sacraments be as visible words offered unto the eyes and other senses, as the sweet sound of the wind to the ear, and the Holy Ghost to the heart." "These teach and confirm none other thing than that the mercy of God saveth the faithful and believers."—*Early Writings of Hooper*, p. 513, *Parker Library*.

BISHOP COVERDALE.

"That faith is the true absolution, it may be perceived by the words of Christ, when he saith so often in the gospel, 'be it unto thee according to thy faith.'" "To the confirmation of faith and hope, serve the holy sacraments of baptism and the supper of the Lord."—*See Remains of Coverdale*, p. 86, *Parker Library*.

BISHOP COVERDALE.

Bishop Coverdale, in reply to one who said, that if faith only justifieth, then good works are useless, says: "Works profit not to salvation (justification): ergo, they profit nothing at all:—is this a pretty consequent? Your consequent is naught with St. Peter, for 'by good works must ye make your vocation certain and sure.' A like argument might ye make after this manner and say: iron is not profitable to chew and to eat, therefore it is nothing worth. Were not this a wise consequent? The smith will tell you a better tale."—*Coverdale's Remains*, p. 342, *Parker Library*.

BISHOP BEVERIDGE.

The sacraments, says Bishop Beveridge on the articles, are to christians what circumcision was to the Jews, "not bare

signs, but sure seals of the righteousness by faith, whereby God doth not only signify his grace to us, but confirms our faith in it; and our faith being confirmed by the sacraments, the sacraments do thereby prove advantageous to our souls;" "yea, no less than sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, whereby God is pleased to work grace in us, and enable us the better to act faith in him." But as to remission of sins, he says, quoting Cyprian, "whether it be given by baptism or other sacraments, it is properly from the Holy Ghost; for to him only the privilege of this work belongs."—*See Beveridge on the 25th and 27th articles.*

BISHOP TAYLOR.

Bishop Taylor, in his *Holy Dying*, p. 300, has the following passage in accordance with the general view taken in this charge. Speaking of our sins being fully remitted by the blood of Christ, he says, "which forgiveness we obtain by faith and repentance, and therefore are not justified by the righteousness of works, but by the righteousness of faith; and we are *preserved* in the state of justification by the fruits of a living faith and a timely active repentance."

VOICE OF THE REFORMATION, PAGE 486.—PERKINS.

Paul, Romans 4th, stands much upon this to prove that justification by faith is not conferred by the sacraments. And from the circumstance of time he gathereth, that Abraham was first justified, and then afterward received circumcision, the sign and the seal of his righteousness. Now we know, that the general condition of all sacraments is one and the same, and that baptism succeeded circumcision. And what can be more plain than the example of Cornelius (Acts x), who before Peter came unto him had the commendation of the fear of God, and was endued with the spirit of prayer; and afterward, when Peter by preaching opened more fully the way of the Lord, he and the rest received

the Holy Ghost.—And after all this, they were baptized. Now if they received the Holy Ghost before baptism, then they received remission of sins, and were justified, before baptism. Objection: Remission of sins, regeneration and salvation, is ascribed to the sacrament of baptism.—Acts xxii: 16; Eph. v: 26; Gal. iii: 27; Titus iii: 5. Answer: Salvation and remission of sins is ascribed to baptism and the Lord's supper, as to the word, which is the power of God to salvation to all that believe; and that, as they are instruments of the Holy Ghost to signify, seal and exhibit to the believing mind the aforesaid benefits; but indeed the proper instrument whereby salvation is apprehended, is *faith*; and sacraments are but props of faith furthering salvation two ways: first, because by their signification they help to nourish and preserve faith; secondly, because they seal grace and salvation to us; yea, God gives grace and salvation *when we use them well.*"

ARCHBISHOP SANDYS.

"And as praying and hearing, so the worthy receiving of God's sacraments is not only a realizing of his grace unto us, but also a testifying of our godliness unto him." "These are pledges and assurances of remission of sins, and salvation purchased by the death of Christ. These are God's seals added unto his most certain promises, for the confirmation of our weak faith, weak by reason of the infirmity of the flesh. For if we were spiritual, says Chrysostom, we should not need these corporal signs."—*Sermons by Archbishop Sandys, p. 87, Parker Library.*

Again, p. 302-3.—"Now as the graces of God purchased for us by Christ are offered unto us by the word, so are they also most lively and effectually by the sacraments." "In his word he hath promised and certified unto us of remission of sins in his death; of righteousness in his merits; of life in his resurrection; and in his ascension, of heavenly and everlasting glory. This promise we take hold of by faith,

which is the instrument of salvation; but because our faith is weak and staggering, through the frailty of our mortal flesh, he hath given us this visible sacrament (the Eucharist) as a real and sure promise of his irrevocable promise for the more assurance and confirmation of our feeble faith. If a prince gave out his letters patent of a gift, so long as the seal is not put to, the gift is not fully ratified; and the party to whom it is given thinketh himself not sufficiently assured of it. God's gift without sealing is sure, as he himself is all one, without changing; yet to bear with our infirmity, and to make us more secure of his promise, to his writing and word he added these outward signs and seals, to establish our faith and to certify us that his promise is most certain."

We cannot forbear to add to the above the following from an American divine of deservedly high reputation, who in his excellent work entitled "Way of Life," has bestowed a rich blessing on the christian community. No one can charge him with undervaluing the sacraments. I need not mention the name of Professor Hodge.

WAY OF LIFE, PAGE 297.

As they are divinely appointed to set forth Christ and his benefits, and to assure the believer of his interest therein, they have, even as moral means, a powerful influence to confirm his faith, to excite his gratitude and love, and to open the fountains both of penitence and joy. But as the word of God has not only its own moral influence, as truth, in the sanctification of the soul, but also, when attended by the demonstration of the Spirit, a divine and effectual power; so the sacraments have not only the influence due to the lively exhibition of truth, but as means of God's appointment, and attended by his Spirit, they become efficacious signs of grace, communicating what they signify. Nothing less than this can satisfy the strong language of the scriptures on this subject, or the experience of God's people. When

the christian, in the exercise of faith, sees in the water of baptism the lively emblem of the purifying influence of the blood and Spirit of Christ, and the bread and wine, the memorials of the Saviour's death, and knows that they are appointed to be a pledge of the salvation of all believers, he receives Christ in receiving the appointed symbols of his grace; he receives anew the forgiveness of his sins; he enters into fellowship with God, and his soul is filled with the Holy Ghost. Hence it is that believers so often find their strength renewed, their faith confirmed, their purposes invigorated, their hearts filled with joy and love, while attending on these ordinances.

WAY OF LIFE, PAGE, 299.

They teach that the sacraments are thus efficacious, not to every recipient, but to the believer; to those who already have the grace which these ordinances represent. If it be asked, how they can be said to confer the grace which is already possessed? let it be remembered, that he who has been sprinkled with the blood of Christ, needs the application to be often repeated; he who has received the Holy Spirit, needs to receive him again; he who has received Christ, needs to receive him day by day, that he may live upon him.

The following testimonies from the confessions of some of the Continental Reformed Churches, will shew that there was but one sentiment among protestants on the main points urged in this Charge:—

The confession of Bohemia says: "That God hath instituted sacraments in his church for great and salutary causes, that by these, like as by preaching of the word, faith might be helped and furthered, that there be in those that use them worthily, a precious participation of the merits of Christ."

The confession of Helvetia says: "But God who is rich in mercy, doth freely purge us from our sins by the blood of

his Son, and in him doth adopt us to be his sons, and by an holy covenant doth join us to himself, and doth enrich us with divers gifts, that we might lead a new life. All these things are sealed up to us in baptism." Of infants it says: "Why should not they be consecrated by holy baptism, who are God's peculiar people, and in the church of God?"

The confession of France says: "Seeing that together with the parents God doth account the posterity also to be of the church, we affirm that infants being born of holy parents, are, by the authority of Christ, to be baptized."

The confession of Helvetia says of the Lord's supper: "True it is that the faithful man, by believing, did before receive the food that giveth life, and still receiveth the same; but yet, when he receiveth the sacrament, he receiveth something more, that is, *he goeth on in a continual communication of the body and blood of the Lord, and his faith is daily more and more kindled, more strengthened and refreshed by the spiritual nourishment.*"

The catechism of Geneva says, that we do not obtain communion with Christ by the supper only.—"For by the gospel, as Paul testifieth, Christ is communicated to us, as we are herein taught that we are *flesh of his flesh and bone of his bone,—that he is the living bread which came down from heaven to nourish souls,—that we are one with him, as he is one with the Father.*"

For fuller statements of the doctrine of these confessions, I refer my brethren to an address delivered to the Convention of 1844, entitled, "The Doctrines of the Episcopal Church not Romish."



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